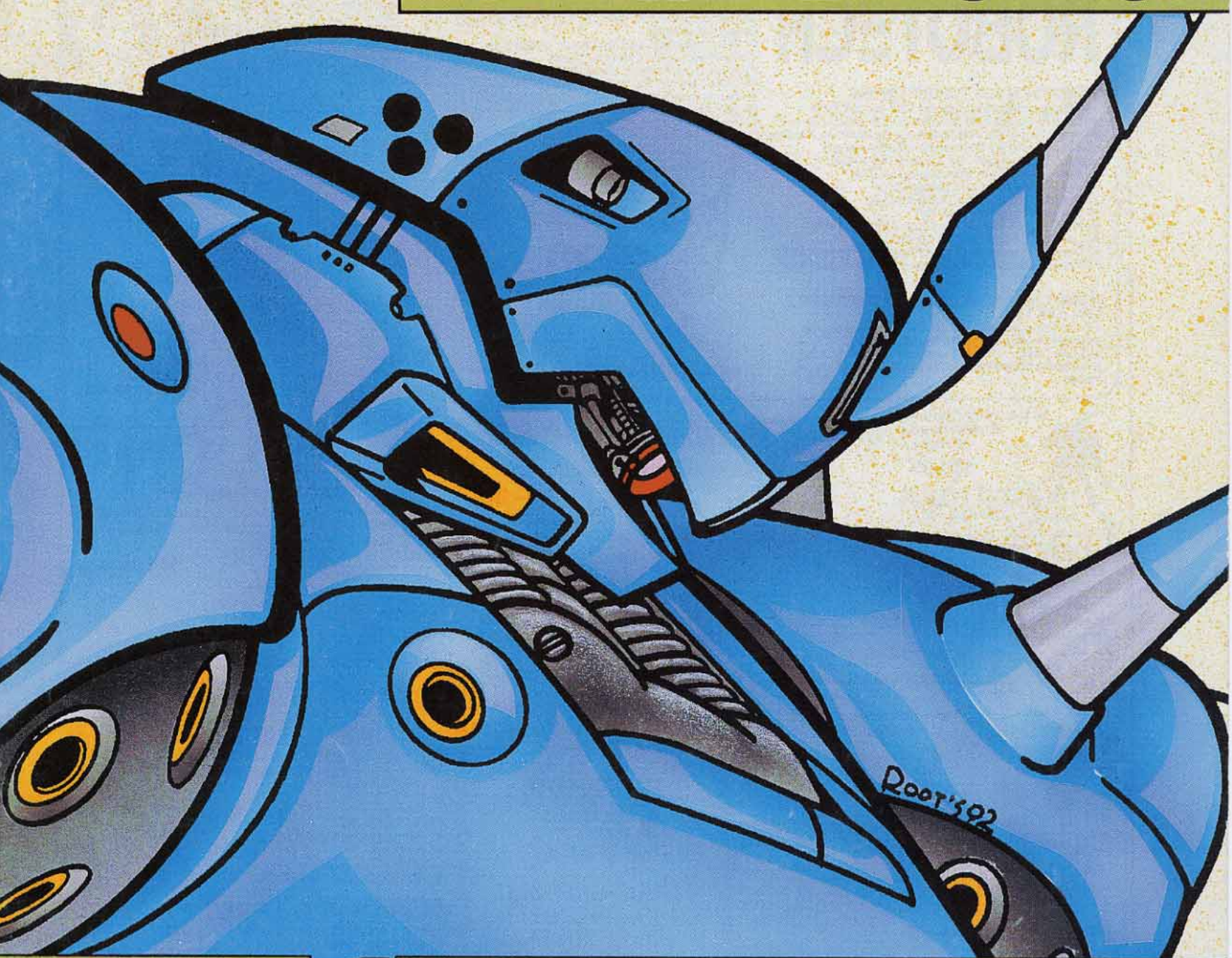


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IT'S NOT JUST A GAME AFTER ALL

by Marc-Alex Vézina



Warfare is about as old as humanity itself. We have the dubious distinction of being the only animal who kills others of its kind not by necessity but for all sorts of reasons we like to call "ideologies". Anime being a mirror (albeit a slightly deformed one) of human life, it is only natural that war occupies a place of choice in it, in all its sinister glory.

I say sinister because we often fail to realize how privileged we are in that war has spared this continent for so long. To us, it has become nothing more than an article on the front page of the morning newspaper, or a flash at the six o'clock news: we shudder for an instant and then go back to our daily routine. We give our children miniature soldiers and toys that emulate terrible engines of destruction to play with, and entertain them with thirty-minutes long commercials that glorify war as the only solution. Yet we find nothing wrong with them, because nobody dies or suffers: "it's just some child's game, right?". Even the Gulf War seemed like an immense video game, played out across the desert sands of a far away place. All you saw in the comfort of your home were the fireworks and the pride of the coalition warriors.

We didn't see the dead. The cameras weren't there when they buried the soldiers who fell in battle and the civilians who were standing in the wrong place. Maybe a few of us know someone who lost a relative or a friend; we may even be that someone. We watched in amazement at the destruction, but not at its ultimate result.

Unlike most other medias, anime often presents war as it is. War is not a romantic endeavor, filled with glory and the joy of conquest, a maker of heroes and supermen like we too often picture it. War is about the daily horror, the devastation, the relief of just being alive for another day. It is about great sacrifice, friendship to death, and the slim hope for a better tomorrow. It simply brings out the very worst and the very best in people.

Gundam 0080 is such a war story. It goes beyond our distorted and diluted perception of conflicts, to reach us and show us the loss of innocence we might be forced to experience one day if we do not take steps to ensure that peace will continue for a long time. It is not a pacifist animation: it is a humane one.

Perhaps there is really something to learn from our hobby.

Marc-Alex Vézina

Marc Alexandre Vézina

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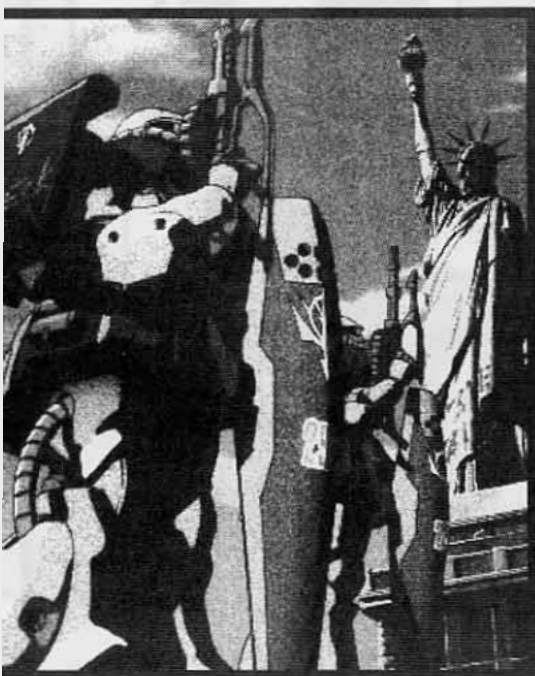
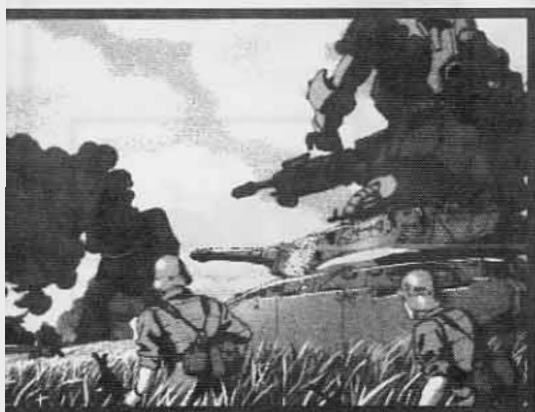
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WHAT'S "0080"?

by Martin Ouellette



Released from March to September 1989 by Emotion, Bandai's own video company, the "GUNDAM 0080: war in the pocket" OVA was born out of the urgent need to simplify GUNDAM as the previous instalments were extremely confusing and hard to follow with their juggling of characters, combats, plots and sub-plots. The "GUNDAM 0080" creators, wanting to create a totally different atmosphere from the other GUNDAM stories, deliberately chose a principal character who wouldn't be a Mobile Suit or a Newtype pilot. Another difference is the small number of characters on which the story is focused.

An important point must be clarified about the Mobile Suit: the mecha of "0080" are redesigned Mobile Suits from "GUNDAM MS". The reason for this is that "0080" is supposed to be happening during the last few weeks of the One Year War (which broke out in 0079 and ended in 0080). But since the first GUNDAM in 1974, the designers' technical views on mecha had changed so much that modifying the original Suits became a must. So 10 years later, in 1989, the mecha designers went back to the drawing boards to create (or more precisely recreate!) the Mobile Suits of "GUNDAM 0080".

A crack team of animators was put together to make "GUNDAM 0080" the most special GUNDAM instalment of them all. It was composed of Director Fumihiko Takayama, Hiroyouki Yamaga (Wings of Honneamis) who handled the screenplay, and Yutaka Izubuchi (Nu GUNDAM: Char's counterattack, Patlabor) who took care of all the mecha designs. The characters were the work of one of the greatest character designers in Japanese animation, the now famous Haruhiko Mikimoto (Macross, Gunbuster, Eve of Megazone 23, etc.).

The story created by them is more or less centered around the third Gundam, the one that never made it to Amuro Rey, the RX-78 NT-1. "War in the pocket" depicts war through the eyes of a ten years old boy, and his subsequent loss of innocence. It also focuses on the untold parts of the One Year War, such as what was going on on the Sides during those terrifying 12 months. "0080" put the accent back on reality to the continuity that was beginning to put a strain on the viewers' imagination with their "Newtype", "psychommu" and other nearly impossible pseudo-techno widgets.

Lately, a new GUNDAM OVA series, "0083: Stardust Memories" was released following the same format as "0080: war in the pocket": keep it simple, beautiful, entertaining and above all believable! But more and more, it seems that GUNDAM will divide itself into two parts, the simple and believable ("0080", "0083") and the Newtype oriented (F91). That should make things clear to the viewers. You want to watch something entertaining and fun? Here's "0080" and "0083". You want your brains to boil? Here is "F91". That will make things a lot easier to understand, won't it?

WHAT'S NEW

NEW GARAGE KIT FROM JAPAN AT

NEW TYPE

HOBBIES AND TOYS

The list you see on this page contains some of the garage kits that are available at NewType Hobbies and Toys, the best garage kit outlet in North America. We say some because this list is far from complete! Many model fanatics have asked for Japanese garage kits to be sold in America but, for a long time, the retailers did not seem to hear them. Luckily for us, now there is a place where we can get those terrifyingly rare kits at a reasonable price: NewType Hobbies and Toys.

Two questions must be answered, though: why are those kits so rare? And why are they so costly? The answer is very simple. They are made one at a time, by hand, in costly material like polymer resin and soft vinyl (although some parts are molded in metal or plastic). This requires special molding techniques and a lot of expertise. The facts they are made in Japan certainly doesn't help either. The cost of importing them is enormous and the American and Canadian Custom services aren't exactly nice with Japanese stuff these days...

But NewType Hobbies and Toys has survived all these hassles and can now bring you those models you've been dreaming about for years, just when you thought that they would remain pictures in Hobby Japan or B-Club.

Another speciality of NewType is plastic model kits. They have an incredible selection of kits from old series like Armored Trooper VOTOMS, Aura Battler Dunbine and Heavy Metal L-Gaim, just to name a few. Newer series like Patlabor, Gundam 0080:war in the pocket, 0083: Stardust Memories and Gundam F-91 are of course readily available.

NewType Hobbies and Toys also has a wide range of books, magazines and posters. For more information, a voluminous mail order catalog is available for the sum of 2.00\$ US, or you can contact Mr. Jeffrey Tom at (415) 731-3077 from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM Monday to Friday and 10:30 AM to 6:30 PM Saturday and Sunday.

FLASH! NewType Hobbies and Toys will soon have in its inventory a model of the Tread fighter from Genesis Climber Mospeada, in 1/72 scale. More on this in the near future!

1/220 SCALE RESIN KITS (NORMAL TYPES)

from MS Gundam:

RX-78 Gundam
MSN-02 Zion
MS-07 Gouf
MS-14 Gelgoog

from Zeta Gundam:

MSZ-006 Zeta Gundam, with mega-launcher
MSN-00100 Haiyaku-Shiki
RX-178 Gundam Mark-II with G-Defenser

from ZZ Gundam:

MSZ-010 Double Zeta Gundam

from Char's Counterattack:

RX-93 Nu Gundam
RGZ-91 ReGZ
MSN-04 Sazabi

from Gundam 0080:

RX-78 NT-1 Gundam "Alex"

from F-91 the Movie:

Mobile Suit Gundam F-91

from the Five Star Stories:

Mortar Headd Bang Doll

1/220 SCALE RESIN KIT ".....

("KONDO" TYPE, DESIGN BY KAZUHISA KONDO)

RMS-108 Marasai Kondo
MSN-04 Sazabi Kondo
AMS-119 Geara Doga Kondo
A/FMSZ-007 Zeta Gundam II ("Gustav") Kondo
PMX-005 Breda
ORX-005 Gaplant ("Sturm Jager") Kondo

1/144 SCALE RESIN KIT

for Gundam Mecha:

Footplates Conversion Kit

from Zeta Gundam:

MSZ-006 Zeta Gundam (Wave Rider mode)
A/FMSZ-007 Zeta II "Gustav" Conversion Kit

from Double Zeta Gundam:

RGM-86R GM III

from Gundam 0083-Stardust Memories:

MS-06F2 Zaku II
MS-09F Dom Trop
RGM-83 GM-Cannon
RGM-79C GM
RGM-79N GM Custom
YMS-16M Xamel (available in August or September)
GP-02A Gundam Conversion Kit (Head unit)

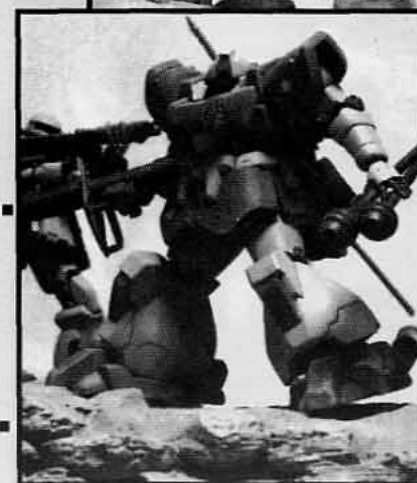
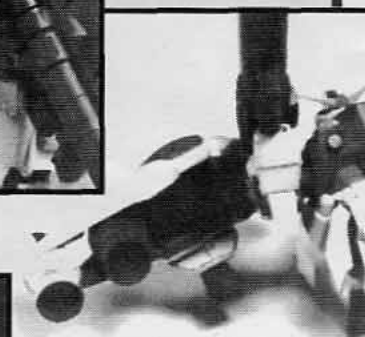
1/100 SCALE RESIN KIT

from F-91 the Movie:

XM-02 Den'an-Gei
XM-03 Ebhiru-S
XM-04 Berga-Dalas Conversion Kit
RGM-109 Heavy Gun Conversion Kit

1/100 SCALE VINYL KIT

AMS-119 Geara Doga with special backpack
MSN-04 Sazabi



SPIRIT WARRIORS EMPIRE SOURCEBOOK



The sourcebook in Mecha! began the story of an uprooted Aztec people hurtled into space to fight as pawns of an alien race. The Spirit Warriors Empire book picks up where the other left off and expands it into a cohesive and intriguing whole.

A few new rules and rule modifications serve to add new facets of the anime genre to Mecha!, but the bulk of the book defines the roles of each of the Aztec city-states, their gods, and their otherworldly surrounding.

Mech specs are included to form war parties for each of the six city-states described, with individual history, combat strategies, and technical illustrations. (These designs will soon be released as models, see elsewhere in the info section.)

Spirit Warriors Empire is now available directly from Seven Street Games for 12\$US, plus 2\$ for shipping and handling. Write to: Seven Street Games, Orders Department, P.O. Box 720791, San Jose, CA 95172-0791, USA.

SPIRIT WARRIOR MODELS ARRIVE

The long-announced, long-in-production resin cast model kits from Seven Street Games are scheduled for distribution on May 15. The first two city-states completed are the Hummingbird Warriors of Huitzilopochtli and the Jaguar Lords of Tezcatlipoca.

According to the gaming newsletter of SSG, the models have a modular design so pieces from one will fit others in the group. In this way, SSG hopes to create a line of models that can be used as "scrap yard pieces" to allow modelers to build their own design.

Suggested prices for the model kits are: Slaves and Lights-7.95\$US, Mid-8.95\$US, Heavy and SuperHeavy-9.95\$US.

WHAT'S COOKING AT FASA

I know hordes of gamers who always like to be informed of new and up-coming products. So, I have planted my ear to the ground, bugged the offices at FASA, and came-up with the following list.

HOT OUT OF THE OVEN

Hot of the presses includes **Wolf Pack** by Robert Charette, **Bloodright** by Blaine Pardoe and **Objective Raids** by Jeffrey Layton.

Wolf Pack: Since FASA began producing novels for BattleTech, Robert Charette has had a big role in presenting Wolf's Dragoons and the Draconis Combine. In this latest installment, Wolf's Dragoons is torn apart by an internal feud. This is the book that changes the Dragoons once and for all. Printed by ROC, ISBN # 0-451-45224-0 Overall Rating : 4

Bloodright: This is the second MechWarrior roleplaying scenario book. This one deals with the Clans and one of their most interesting tradition. We'll review this one in an upcoming issue of **MechaPress** devoted to the Clans. Overall Rating : withheld until full review.

Objective Raids: When war is constant, real big fights are scarce. Instead, the entire affair degenerates into something Jaime Wolf called "cattle raiding". **Objective Raids** gives the players and the GM the information they may need to decide where to strike. It covers all border areas between enemies, with detailed listing of the military forces and factories. A perfect springboard for stories, combat and even high finance. It's a great source of information. Overall Rating : 4

Vehicle Record Sheets: Well, it was only a matter of time. This set was released just days before we went into publications. Overall Rating : withheld until full review.

Technical Readout 3055: Did you really think that the Inner Sphere just stood there and watched the Clans pound them into the ground? Nope, they actually began developing the tools to fight them, and heck, those tools are BattleMechs. Comstar again goes all out to present us with a updated list of what their ROM agents were able to collect. Of course, there is still no Comstar 'Mechs, as they are "Need to know Only". Look for some "Cool" color plates in the center. A set of Record Sheets will be also released in August '92.



STILL BAKING

Using our advanced BattleTech detection device, built during the glorious days of Star League [NOT!], we will attempt to give you a listing of those products that are already in the works. If anything ever gets canceled, we'll try to indicate that too. Note: We don't guaranty the stated deadlines. (I'm positive FASA wouldn't either.)

BattleTech 3rd Edition: This is the revision of BattleTech the boxed set. Should make for a very nice introduction, since the last boxed set, edition 2, is now way out of date. Tentative release : RSN (Real Soon Now)

Comstar Sourcebook: The peace of Blake will finally be with us. I can tell you that it's product number 1617 and that it has once

before made the product list, then got canned. My informants say that none other than Blaine Pardoe gets to write this sourcebook. Tentative release : September '92

Jade Falcon Sourcebook: We have the Wolves, so now comes the Jade Falcons. The art department should be finishing it's part soon. Tentative release : May '92

McCarron's Armored Cavalry: I feel like a Big Mac attack is coming on! This sourcebook was recently finished by development, and now should adorn the walls of the art department. Tentative release : Unknown

Natural Selection: Quote from Michael Stackpole : "NATURAL SELECTION is a Kell Hound/Wolf Clan novel. A pirate is cutting a wide swath through the Federated Commonwealth and the Hounds are teamed with a Wolf Clan unit to hunt them down. The Wolf Clan unit is commanded by Conal Ward and Phelan is the liaison officer. Loads of fun for all <g>". By the way, <g> stands for "grin", and the quote came from GENIE. Tentative release : May '92 according to FASA but I would say Summer, as ROC received book on the 11th of April.



MEKTON CLOSER TO JAPANIMATION

by Marc-Alex Vézina

Last month we presented new rules for the construction of mechas in the Mekton II system, namely a scaling system, a new engine table, and some other minor improvements. This month we continue with the last part of the construction system, and we introduce some detailed damage tables.

STEP 5: FUEL

The designers of Mekton promised time and time again to publish some rules concerning the use of fuel in flying mechas. They never did, so here is a system for those of you who wish to simulate it.

Each mecha automatically has 20 000 points of fuel with the purchase of a flight system (jet only). This might seem like a lot but you'll be surprised how fast it goes! Each point of fuel buys one point of flight MA, regardless of the system used.

Fans do not need reaction mass and therefore are often powered by the main engine itself. You can use the fuel rules with fan systems, but this type of fuel (namely kerosene) can explode; jet fuel on the other hand is helium, an inert gas (inert means it cannot explode) serving as reaction mass.

The average expenditure is 4 000 points per hour of flight. Thus, the standard fuel tank holds enough fuel for five hours of flight at 10 MA. If travelling faster or slower, adjust accordingly. When entering combat, you can either keep track of the fuel consumed (lots of bookkeeping), or use an average fuel expenditure to know if you have sufficient reserves to stay airborne. This fuel is kept in the main body; sadistic gamemasters can allow for an explosion (or leak) in case of internal damage.

Extra fuel can be bought. One thousand (1 000) points cost 1 CPs for each ten tons of mecha weight. For units with multiplied weight (see last issue), use the "new" weight to calculate the cost but do not scale the fuel points. Four thousands (4 000) points fit in one space.

External fuel tanks

If you do not wish to waste internal space on fuel, you can have external fuel tanks instead. These tanks cost the same as internal tanks, i.e. 1 000 points for CPs (1 per ten tons), but these CPs are added to the price AFTER the mecha is designed and its cost is calculated. These can be placed anywhere on the mecha and can be dropped at any time, at no action cost. They do however impose a penalty of -1 MV for each 4 000 points (or part) of fuel carried; this penalty is cumulative. If a servo holding a fuel tank is hit, the fuel tank is automatically destroyed, no matter how little damage is done.

DETAILED DAMAGE TABLES

Normally, when your mecha gets hit, you roll on the Random Hit Table and subtract the damage done from the Kills of the servo. When the Kill value reaches zero, the servo becomes unusable. But what happens in between? Surely, the servo as it gets damaged, suffers a loss of capacity.

When role-playing, the heroes (Read: the players) will, of course, have to face these minor (!) problems. Use the following damage procedure:

- roll on the Random Hit Table (p.51, MEKTON II);
- in case of armor penetration, roll on the corresponding Detailed Damage Table;
- apply result.

To use the Detailed Damage Table, simply roll a die and add the number of Kills done. Then move up or down the table according to the weight of your mecha. The abbreviation SD means Structural Damage: reduce Kills value by damage received. Actuator Hit causes a -1 penalty on servo strength (all servos if the hit is in the Main Body) plus a -1 penalty on dodging (non-cumulative). The Internal Damage Table is found on page 52 of the rulebook.

Once again, it's time to say goodbye. Happy robot-bashing!

DETAILED DAMAGE TABLES

TONNAGE MODIFIER

Roll	Result
0-19	Move Down Table 2 Points
20-39	Move Down Table 1 Point
40-69	Do Not Move
70-89	Move Up Table 1 Point
90+	Move Up Table 2 Points

MAINBODY

Roll	Result
1-4	SD
5	SD+Control Thrusters: -1 MA (Flight)
6-8	SD+1 Roll on Internal Damage Table
9-12	SD+2 Roll on Internal Damage Table
13-16	SD+Actuator Hit
17-20	SD+1 Roll on Internal Damage Table + Heat exchanger damaged (-1D3 action per turn)
21+	Torso severed, check for PP explosion

LEG, MOVEMENT PLATFORM*

Roll	Result
1-3	SD
4-6	SD+Motion System: -1MA (Ground)
7-9	SD+Actuator Hit
10-12	SD+Motion System: -2MA (Ground)
13-15	SD+Falling
16+	Leg severed

*MA penalty are not cumulative

ARM, TAIL

Roll	Result
1-3	SD
4-6	SD+Control: -1 WA
7-9	SD+Actuator Hit
10-12	SD+Hand Damaged: Cannot Move
13-15	SD+Hand Blown Off
16+	Arm Severed

WING

Roll	Result
1-5	SD
5-6	SD+Control Surfaces: Piloting roll required to turn in wing's direction
7-8	SD+Actuator: Wing cannot move or retract (-1 Flight MA)
9+	Wing Severed

HEAD

Roll	Result
1-3	SD
4-6	SD+Servo: Head cannot turn, weapons fire forward only
7-9	SD+Sensors scrambled: -3 this turn only
10+	Head severed



MECHA DESIGNS ADAPTATION FOR MEKTON

by Marc-Alex Vézina

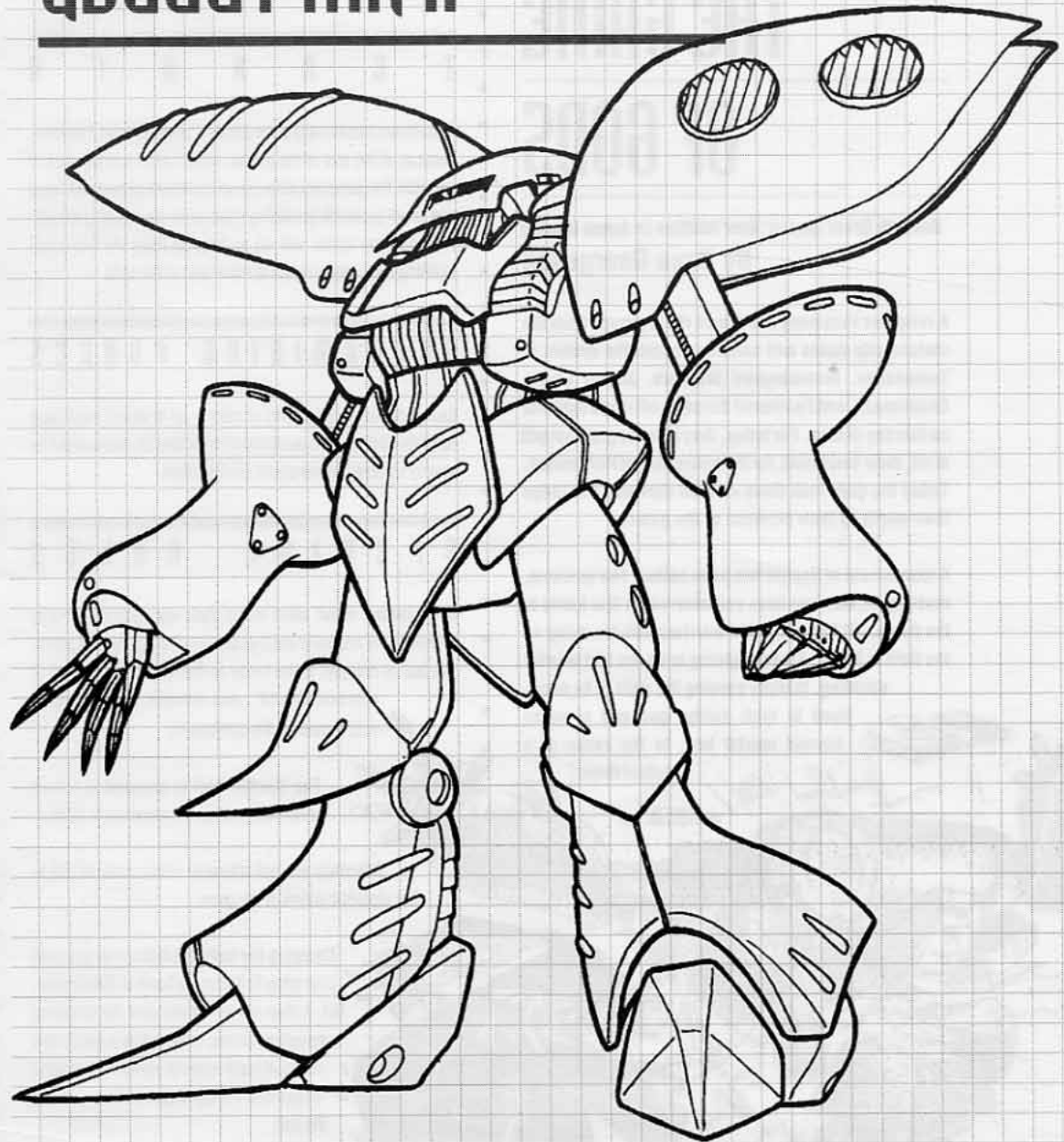
The Qbeley is the usual mecha of Aman Khan, the leader of the Axis force in the Zeta Gundam serie. Well armed, fast and maneuverable, it is one of the most deadly machine ever encountered in Gundam.

The adaptation use the rules from Mecha-Press 2 and the Mekton Empire sourcebook. I believe the Qbeley normally has psionnic control, but I wasn't sure so I designed the mecha without them. Beside, the mecha is powerful enough already!

As a side note: the remote bits described in Mekton Empire are a bit (pun intended) powerful for their cost. With its ten bits, the Qbeley can hope to cause 10 K of damage per turn, at a range of 18 hexes. All this for twenty CPs. Hummm... need to think about it.

AMX-004

QBELEY MK II



AMX-004 QBELEY MK III

NAME: QBELEY MK II AMS-004
TONNAGE: 57.2
WEIGHT MULTIPLIER: 1
TECH MULTIPLIER: 2.5
CPS: 143
GROUND MA: 7
FLIGHT MA: 15
MV: -2

COMPONENTS

NAME	LEVEL	ARMOR
POWER PLANT	HS	-
MAIN BODY	HS	HS
HEAD	MS	S
ARM+CLAWS (2)	MS	MS
LEG (2)	HS	MS

EQUIPMENT

NAME	LOC	REMARK
FLIGHT SYSTEM	LL, RL, MB	JET

WEAPONS

NAME	LOC	REMARK
PLASMA CANNON	RA	-
PLASMA CANNON	LA	-
10 X REMOTE BITS	MB	-



MECHA![™] THE GAME OF GODS

Seventh Street Games' New Addition to Anime Gaming
By Dave Georgeson

A religious ceremony has drawn ritual groups from the various city-states and cultures around the system of Tamoachan. Hummingbird Warriors, Jaguar Lords, Chichimecá, and Feathered Serpents all stand together on this day of days. For today, they give the greatest gift of all, their own blood, for the entire clan of Huitznahua. Today the gods look down on their servants and judge their worth by their prowess at the game.

A tournament of tlachtli has been called. The quickest, most agile, warriors have volunteered for this battle to the death. All but one of the warriors will die today on the field of battle. All are fighting to be the last warrior standing, thereby earning the right to be sacrificed to their patron god and elevated beyond mortal ken, to the ranks of a Knight of Order.



Since the warriors will be fighting in their Warrior Skins (mecha), the rules of the ancient game have been changed to allow for differences between mecha and mere mortals. But the glory of the game is still the same.

TERRAIN

Tlachtli was traditionally played in an "I" shaped court. However, because of the size of the mecha, substitutes must be used. If possible, the game should be set up in a temple district with large and small pyramids providing solid cover for dodging targets. However, any terrain will do as long as there are two small buildings with stone hoops at either end of the field.

DETERMINING FORCES

Each side has 2,000 points of mecha, all of which must have hand-to-hand options available to them, and all mecha must be able to assume the humanoid configuration.

SPECIAL RULES

Both teams must start within their war party's goal area (within 18" of one table end; teams start at opposite table ends). The ball is dropped at the center of the field from a height of approximately 18", and remains where it lands until moved by the combatants.

The tlachtli ball is covered in a force sphere that makes it impervious to harm.

Missiles are not allowed in this scenario due to the ritualistic nature of the game.

Carrying the ball: The ball can be grappled (3 or better to hit) on any hand-to-hand phase. But, it may not be moved until the following movement phase, making this a dangerous move. A mecha may not punch or use hand weapons or energy weapons while carrying the ball.

Throwing the ball: A mecha may use the grapple and throw maneuver to heave the ball in a specific direction. The ball will travel 1d6" for every die of armor the mecha has. This may be "pulled," as the mecha is not required to use full strength when throwing. *Example:* A mecha with four armor dice throws the ball. The mecha rolls 4d6 for distance for the number of

inches the ball travels. The mecha might have "pulled" the throw, enabling the player to roll one, two, or three dice instead of the full four, if desired.

Kicking the ball: The kick is more powerful than the throw. The ball travels 1d10" for each armor die of the mecha. However, kicks aren't as accurate as throws. Use the Targeting Template, roll 1d3 and move the ball in either the #3, "straight away", or #4 direction. A kick may be pulled when kicking the ball.

Scoring a goal: A ball may either be placed through the hoop or thrown through it. Either way, the scoring mecha must roll 3 or better on 1d10 to get the ball through. The hoop is only slightly bigger than the ball, so throwing it through is exceedingly difficult. All throwers are at -1 to hit for every 2" from the hoop they throw from. The ball may only be thrown at the goal if the player is within a 90° angle of one side of the hoop. (Tlachtli hoops stand vertically and are "edge-on" to the field direction. In other words, if you stand in the center of the field and look at a hoop, all you will see is rim.)

Missing a goal: When pushing the ball through in hand-to-hand, the mecha retains possession of the ball, but may not try again until the next hand-to-hand phase controlled. A thrown ball will either overshoot the goal, or hit and bounce off the hoop. Roll 1d6 when a miss happens: On a roll of 1-3, the ball overshoots and travels the full distance rolled on the throwing dice; On a 4-6, the ball bounces and travels the remainder of its throwing distance in a direction determined as in the *ricochet* rule below.

Ricochets: Occasionally, a ball hits a substantial terrain piece and bounces off. The ball is made of a resilient material and loses no momentum from bouncing. Therefore, the ball moves away from the terrain piece at a 90° angle to the direction it travelled to get there. The sole exception to this rule is if the throwing direction was straight on to the terrain piece it hit. In this case, the ball will travel directly back toward the thrower until its throwing distance has been reached. Multiple ricochets are possible.

A tlachtli round is completed when one goal has been scored. **After a round** is complete, the scoring mecha is awarded one roll on the Spirit table (pg. 117). All mecha on the scoring mecha's team double the amount of experience gained during the round (due to the extra glory associated with the game). All combatants still alive will receive **two** of the repair options listed below (player's choice):

- One armor die repaired (any type, including shield);
- Five system integrity repaired;
- Refill one missile bay;
- Attach four new missile pods;
- Repair all previously existing hand-to-hand options;
- Repair one ranged weapon.

Once all skills and repairs have been assigned, previously existing teams are dissolved, and two new teams are formed as evenly as possible. Play then begins anew and rounds continue until only one mecha still exists.

The field is surrounded by an impenetrable force screen preventing the ball from being thrown off the table and acting as substantial terrain for any mecha crashing or being thrown into it.



WELCOME TO SOLARIS VII

by Stéphane Matis

Fighting is an everyday occurrence in the Inner Sphere, but on Solaris it's big business. The city of Solaris, named after the planet on the border of Marik and Steiner, is Las Vegas and New York rolled into one, where BattleMech combat steals center stage from the show girls.

Solaris is money, corruption, organized crime and an outlet for inter-house tension.

Solaris is to BattleTech what Seattle is to Shadowrun, Lankhmar is to AD&D, Tokyo is to Palladium and Night City is to Cyberpunk.

BOARD GAME

Solaris VII rules for 'Mech battle were designed to simulate the fast and furious "redline" style of combat that is encountered in the Solaris arena circuit. As such, the scale for time, distance and much of everything else has been reduced or magnified by a factor of four. For example, hexes are 7.5 meters, turns are 2.5 seconds but the heat created by weapons and movement is four times BattleTech scale. Yes, an ER PPC creates 60 heat points!

A factor that changes the style of play from regular BattleTech, and adds a spice of reality, is the weapon reload/recycle delay time. Such delay oriented weapon management makes the game more detailed and accurate but also makes **Solaris VII** that much harder to master. For example, the ER PPC takes four (4) Solaris turns to recharge its capacitors before it may fire again. The dueling rules also present exiting multi-turn jumps, deadly machine guns and plenty of heat problems.

There are some optional rules in **Solaris VII**. They include:

- **Disengaging PPC field inhibitor**, a move that would cancel a PPC's myopic and make your 'Mech liable to blow apart.
- **Expended Initiative**, where combat is **NOT** simultaneous. Very deadly!
- **Hot Loading LRMs**, something you read about, but under most circumstances you wouldn't want to do. It cancels myopic and again, your 'Mech is ready to blow up.
- **Interlocking Streak SRMs**, triggers all Streaks together. If you miss, none of them fire, if you hit, they all hit the same spot. Of course, there is a penalty.

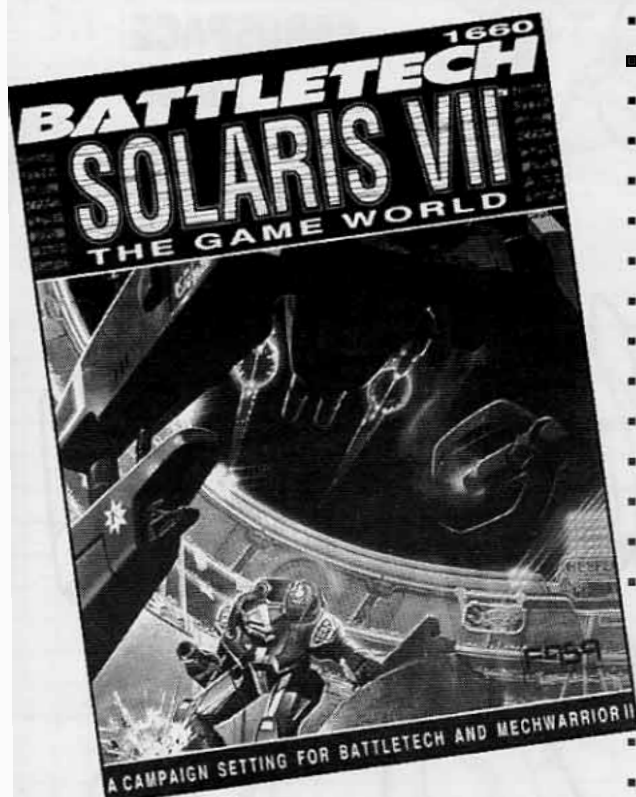
- **Overriding Delay**, unlike the other optional rules, this rule is only useful in the Solaris scale. The rule allows you to fire a weapon that is not ready, due to the recycle/reload delay. Of course, you have to pay dearly in heat!

Solaris also makes it possible to do Careful Aim and Aimed Shots. With a maximum total of +8 to hit a particular weapon or specific location, only the very best can achieve success. But you can dream!

ROLEPLAYING AIDE

The **Solaris VII** boxed set contains two booklets: the Player's Book and the Gamemaster's Book. This packaging method has never been seen in a BattleTech product before.

The Player's Book deals mostly with the history and current political and social background of the planet. The **Solaris VII** chapter gives a glimpse into the past, indicating that the famous Star League Gunslingers were the magnet that attracted the original crowds. **Solaris City** describes the Government and the rather inefficient and complicated manner that it rules. **The Law and Order / Crime** describe the forces of the Law and their seemingly impossible task of curbing the all powerful crime syndicates, all of which make a comfortable living on this planet. **Solaris Sites** is a thorough overview of all the five sub-cities, one per major Inner Sphere power. Finally, the



DUAL PURPOSE BOXED SET

Solaris VII is a vivid and exciting supplement for BattleTech that covers both board game and roleplaying elements. It provides an exiting and challenging board game combined with the mechanics of the tournament environment, and the chance to roleplay in the murky environment that makes up the background of Solaris and BattleTech in general.



REVIEW

Don't get me wrong, I like this game. Heck, I played in the first big playtesting session over a year ago at FASA and had a chance to voice my opinions before publication. But the last thing I expected to be missing in this game were 'Mech counters. The trading cards are nice, but counters, paper or plastic, are a must if you want to get the proper visual feel of the game. Using counters for other 'Mechs defeats the purpose of having such great looking new ones. Also, the lack of counters prohibits the game from being a **true** stand-alone product. That's a shame.

The influence of FASA's Shadowrun is clearly visible throughout the manuals. The map reference by sub-city in the Player's Book reminds me of the Seattle Sourcebook and so does the encounter table in the Gamemaster's Book. Such cloning of style is appropriate, as **Solaris VII** has a **darker** outlook than most places in BattleTech and using established standards allows more development time for other BattleTech products.

I like the quality posters that FASA publishes. The map of the Inner Sphere that is included in **Solaris VII** is beautifully adorned with color insignias of all the "major players" of the Inner Sphere and the Clans. So where is the problem with that? Well, they also published the map of Solaris City on the reverse side. That's a bummer, 'cause you can't stick the map up on the wall if you want to use the Solaris City Map as gaming reference. It would have been nice to get one of each. My recommendation to FASA is to add a copy of this map to another product, so that people may collect two.

What else? Well, the arena maps are too small and they are printed on poster quality stock. This "paper" is inferior to the stock they use for the new supplemental maps, and can easily break at the folds. Also, with a quarter scale rules, you need a lot of space for a maneuverable 'Mech to play. In fact, only the Davion arena doesn't suffer from the lack of space because the Ice Glacier map that's included can be ignored and two or more regular maps used instead. That's what I do. Otherwise, you end up with very short range combat, which favors armor a lot more than mobility.

Finally, to make your life easier, let me give a small **errata** list.

- Ignore the page 3 of the Player's Book. The index presented there is wrong, as those items are found only in the Gamemasters Book.
- Heat generated in one turn by a damaged engine is the same as in BattleTech. Thus one hit = 5 heat, 2 hits = 10 heat.

WRAP UP

- Even with the few errors, this is a great product because two players, fighting head-to-head, need only one 'Mech each to have fun and be challenged. The roleplaying background is rich and well developed. Classic FASA style and quality. FASA has to be congratulated for making such an effort in tying together roleplaying and a board game into a single product. It looks good for the future of the BattleTech line.

■ Overall Rating : 4 out of a possible 5.

section titled **The Arenas** gives a technical survey of each arena, as well a documentary style point of view by a particular MechWarrior. There very last page is a **Solaris Slang** reference.

The Gamemaster's Book tackles such topics as **Running Adventures**, the **Major Stables and Cooperatives** and **The Top 20** MechWarriors on the arena circuit. There is also, **Solaris Encounters**, for quick pick of settings, **'Mech Duel Rules**, which covers all the combat rules, and a review of the basics of **Arena Combat**, accompanied by a running commentary on each of the five major stadiums.

Between the two booklets, the gamemaster and the players should find all the information they need to get to most out of playing on Solaris. In fact, the set is self-contained enough to be considered separate game. If you have **MechWarrior 2nd Edition** and the **BattleTech Compendium** or other BattleTech products, you can extend your enjoyment further by settling one-on-one duels in Solaris scale.

ADDED BENEFITS

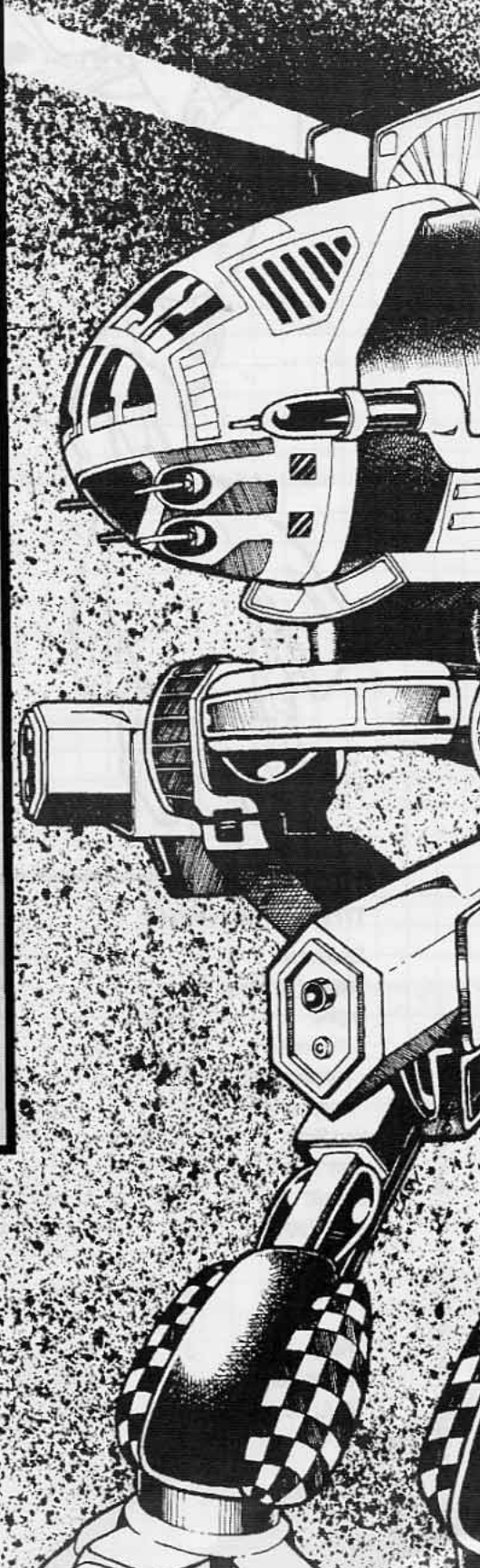
The box also contains a variety of materials commonly found in BattleTech box sets, and some not so common. The counter sheet supplied is one of the highest quality in a long time. There is nothing extravagant about it, but all the colors match up, and the cutting guides are nearly perfect.

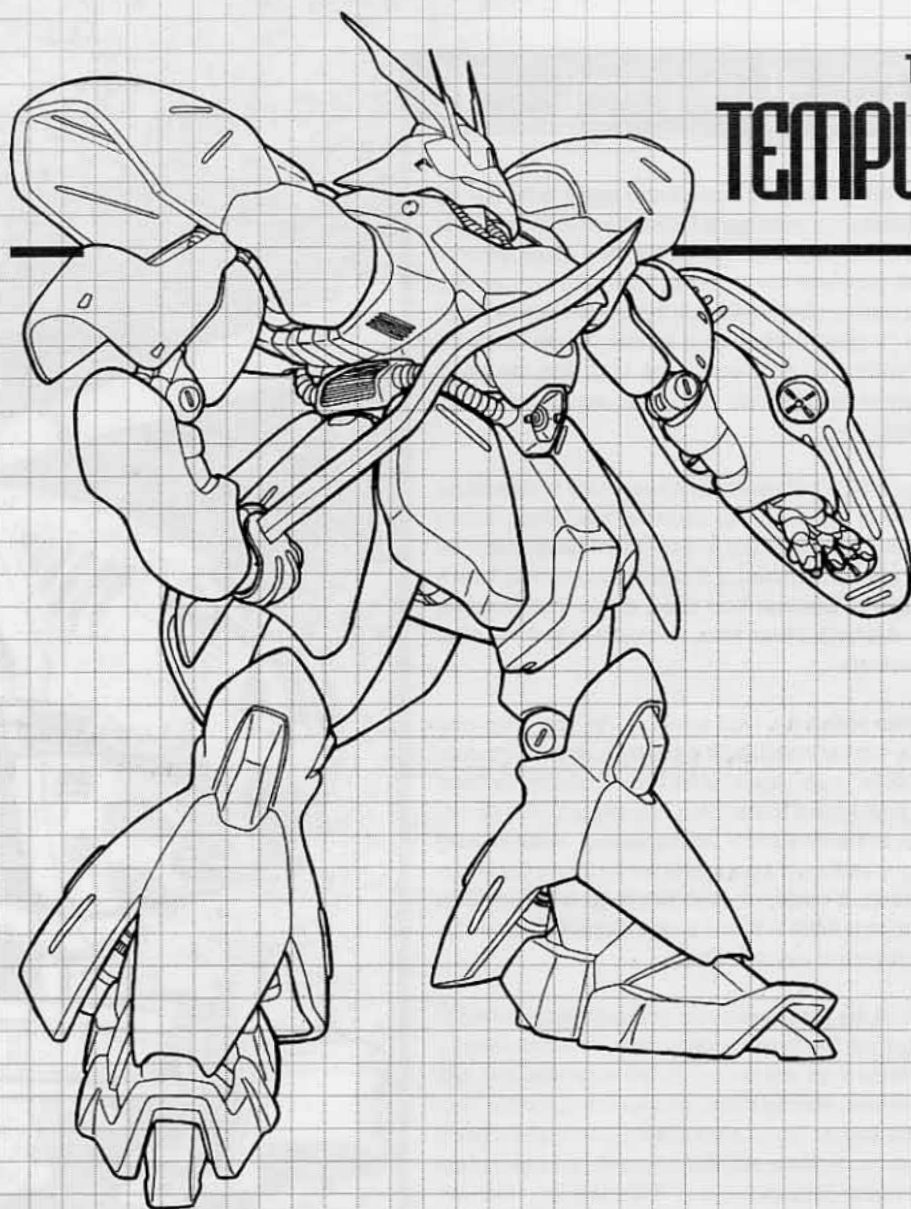
Solaris VII includes a dozen BattleMechs specially designed for arena style combat. This stuff is great! The 'Mechs are flamboyant designs with outrageous colors and all. Colors? ... Surprise! Solaris includes twelve BattleMech trading cards! They are really neat, with art by Laubenstein! The artistic style of these FASA 'Mechs is closer to Japanimation style, which makes them very popular here at **MechaPress**! Finally, there are 3 maps that portray the arenas, a poster map of the Inner Sphere and the 'Mech damage record sheets.

RUNDOWN OF THE CONTENTS

The Box contains the following :

- 1 player's book
(**MechWarrior's Guide to the Game World**)
- 1 gamemaster's book
(**Solaris VII Gamemaster's Guide**)
- 1 stat book
- 3 double-sided 24" x 36" mapsheets
- 1 counter sheet
- 12 BattleMech trading cards
- 1 poster map of the Inner Sphere





TPL-8R TEMPLAR

OVERVIEW

The year is 3054. Solaris is going through another booming season, a trend that hasn't relented since the beginning of the Clan invasion. Today's arenas are the site of more flamboyant fights, with many tag team matches, many **Clan Style** matches.

A couple of light years away, on the planet Hesperus II, one of the greatest robberies of all time has occurred. Defiance Industries of Hesperus II, under contract to the Federated Commonwealth, have spent the last two years working on advanced BattleMechs. Unfortunately, the first prototype of the most promising design, the **Beserker**, has been stolen by someone or some organization. FC intelligence was alerted immediately.

While investigation pursued the possibility of an inside connection, agents on **Solaris VII** reported a sighting of the prototype. As the operatives were unable to mount an effective recuperation, due to ongoing Clan shadow war activities, the Seven Deadly Sins stable was called into action.

The stable received the **Templar**, a testbed BattleMech based on the **Cavalier** chassis by Earthwerks. The **Templar** is the product of Project Avatar, based at the secret facility of Echo Mirage. This 'Mech is a combination of the best technology available to Echo Mirage and was specifically designed after the **Unbound** incident for retrieval or destruction of sensitive technology, to prevent it from falling into enemy hands.

TECHNICAL READOUT

Mass: 90 tons

Chassis: Earthwerks CVL 1 Endo Steel modified by NAIS

Power Plant: Salvaged Clan XL 360

Cruising Speed: 43 kph

Maximum Speed: 65 kph

Jump Jets: Rawlings 75

Jump Capacity: 120 meters

Armor: Valiant Gauntlet

Armament:

- Two Salvaged Clan Pulse Large Lasers
- One Modified Earthwerks Detachable Cavalier Shield
- One Project Excalibur Sword
- One High Flare Self Destruct Device
- Triple Strength Myomer

Manufacturer: New Avalon Institute of Science - Echo Mirage Facility

Communications System: Banzai Micro Talk with Salvaged Clan ECM

Targeting And Tracking System: NAIS 7DS VRPP Computer linked to Salvaged Clan Targeting Computer

TYPE: TPL-8R TEMPLAR

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		4.5
Engine:	360 XL	16.5
Walking MPs:	4	
Running MPs:	6	
Jumping MPs:	4	
Heat Sinks:	14 (28)	4
Gyro:		4
Cockpit:	VRPP	3
Armor Factor:	256	16

WEAPONS AND AMMO:

Type	Loc	Critical	Tonnage
Large Pulse Laser	H	2	6
Large Pulse Laser	H	2	6
Shield (AF 48)	LA	6	12
Targeting Computer	LT	3	3
Guardian ECM	LT	1	1
Jump Jets	LL	2	4
Sword	RA	5	5
Self Destruct Device	RT	1	1
Jump Jets	RL	2	4

Value: TPL-8R Templar 500 Million C-Bills
(Due to being Unique)

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head:	3	9
Center Torso:	29	33/24
Rt./Lt. Torso:	19	20/16
Rt./Lt. Arm:	15	28
Rt./Lt. Leg:	19	31

AS IT HAPPENS :

The Seven Sins discover that the **Beserker** will be shown in a private arena fight, setup as a sales pitch to potential buyers. Still hot on the charts, the Seven Sins arrange to be billeted against the unknown stable in a *blind* match. According to the agreement, either side can deploy any 'Mech for the fight.

Of course, the Seven Sins know exactly what they are going to fight, and they are armed to do so. Expecting a refitted 3025 'Mech as opposition, the mysterious enemy organization looses the match to the superior **Templar** and with it, the **Beserker** prototype.

The remains of the **Beserker** prototype were returned to Defiance Industries and the **Templar** returned to Echo Mirage. FC intelligence was unable to arrest anyone in the case. Case closed ?

TECHNICAL DETAILS

The **Templar** is a *maxed out* BattleMech. The design style is based on the Sazabi from the GUNDAM Japanimation series. In fact, it combines so many disparate rules, that it should be *illegal*, but if FASA can build such a **unique** 'Mech, so can we. You'll find the rules relating to the equipment in either the **BattleTech Compendium** or **Unbound**.

If you are wondering what the **Beserker** looks like, you'll have to wait until FASA publishes **Technical Readout 3055**. Note, the prototype **Beserker** involved in the story differs with the production model by replacing the ECM system with a self-destruct device, carefully hidden inside the engine.

Other question you may have, with appropriate answers are :

- Q:** How come the Seven Sins are still together ?
A: Why cancel something that is so successful? If the GM needs a new Stablemaster, try Ex-Eridani Light Horse Major Michael Bentley, who would graciously accept the position. The stable has the best of 3050 technology and receives *special* equipment **only** when the need arises.
- Q:** Who is this mysterious group that stole the **Beserker** in the first place ?
A: Wouldn't you like to know! Ahem, let's call them the *Illuminated Ones* for now.
- Q:** When is **Technical Readout 3055** coming out ?
A: See **What's Cooking at FASA** below.
- Q:** Where are the rules for **Swords, Self Destruct** device, etc_ ?
A: See **Unbound** above.
- Q:** What are the rules concerning shields ?
A: See **MechaPress**, Issue #1.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE ?

As I write this, my mind is racing through the millions of possible topics I can cover, and the dozens of formats I may do them in. I need your help to narrow my focus, so if you have any ideas, requests [no Polkas please !] and praise or complaints, send them to me and I'll do my very best to address them. If life is simple, I may even answer some of you directly. No promises.

Send me a postcard or letter to :
 Mecha•Press

Electronically, you can also reach me on :

Internet :

Mail Address:

kgnome/councour. cs. concordia. ca
 or the BattleTech discussion in :
 rec.games.board

GEnie :

Mail Address :
 SMATIS

As a service to readers, I compiled a list of electronic methods to reach FASA and related people and products.

FASA maintains two zones in the electronic landscape. One on Compuserve, the other on GEnie. I'm no fan of Compuserve, so I don't have information on them. For GEnie, FASA's LTG is :

- Scorpius Roundtable [805], Category 7
 Michael Stackpole is a popular BattleTech writer. His accomplishments changed the entire game. I have found him on GEnie as well, with his own topic no less !
- Science Fiction and Fantasy Round Table [470], Category 11, Topic 22
 Did you know that there is a Multi Player version of BattleTech the computer game ? Yeah ! And , surprise, surprise it's hiding on GEnie. The documentation can be found on-line at :
- Multiplayer Games [1045], Category 27
 Enjoy ! Until NeXT time !

In upcoming Issues of **MechaPress** :

"Dirty Dogs" **Q:** What is it ?! **A:** It's fun! **Q:** What is it for ? **A:** Solaris VII

Twilight of the Clans Who are they ? What are they doing after their loss on Tukayid ?

BattleTech 3rd Ed. & Technical Readout 3055
 Look for previews and reviews soon !





WHY "WAR IN THE POCKET"

By Etienne Gagnon

Strange things happen during a war. War stories are always fascinating, even if you know it is the most awful thing that could happen to you. Nevertheless, war tales have these qualities to them. Maybe because you can see human emotions reaching all of the extremes they normally don't. Maybe because some also see in armored conflicts a way to escape their ordinary lives. People's imagination have always been captured by war because they feel they are given the possibility to realize all their potential in it, or so they think.

This is what Alfred, the young 10 years old main character of Gundam 0080, seems to think. He would do anything to put some excitement in his life. He gets involved in the war and is glad to. War brings him many things he's searching for: understanding, a big brother, adventure, and so on. The feeling that he's really doing something good overwhelms him so that he doesn't try to escape what is happening to him because it is much too exciting.

Alfred meets Bernie, a young inexperienced Zeon Mobile Suit pilot. Bernie is part of a commando sent out to destroy the third Gundam prototype, the NT-1. This commando is composed of five members, namely Captain Schneider, Garcia, Misha, Andy and Bernie. Al feels so glad being accepted by those adults he idolizes (after all they're soldiers!), pilots on a dangerous mission and to top it off, they need him! Wow! So he gets involved in their mission and for a short time everything is fine. Bernie has a crush on Christina McKenzie, the pilot of the NT-1. Captain Schneider's plan goes almost according to orders...

Al wishes so strongly for everything to go well, he loves and admires Bernie and Christina so much, he is as enthusiastic as only a ten year old can be. Coming to realize that war can also be cruel, that it can take the ones you love away from you will come very quickly to young Al. He finds out that you can't carry war in your pocket like those smalls toys you carry when you are young. All the commandos, except for Bernie, die. Bernie wants to escape. Even the security of the entire colony will be threatened. Al's universe crumbles around him. Try to

remember when you were a kid and suddenly you discovered that your hero was, after all, just another human being, with the same fears you have...

Alfred's loss of innocence is quite rough. What can a ten year old boy do when he is confronted with real life, where people are hurt and die? War used to be fascinating to him, as it can be for everyone who is shielded by a protective society. The message carried by Gundam 0080 changes from being the adventures of a small boy who enters, in a way, the adult world by an experience with war, to a sad story about a kid who's confronted with loss and pain. The viewer has no choice but to follow Al in his hope that everything will work out well. Even if you are not ten year old anymore you can feel what Al is going through, so you follow him closely, developing the same hopes and fears he has. But the tragedy is inevitable, it can be seen coming

from far away, and nothing can be done about it. I wanted so much for this story to have a happy ending, but it can't. War is not something fun to experience, unlike what many think, even if it is a chance to be very courageous and to show to everybody what you are really worth.

Gundam 0080 is quite a sad story. By telling such a story from a small boy's point of view (not from a mecha pilot's), far from the front-line, it gives the viewers a new perspective on this universe. It can be perceived as a condemnation of war and its consequences on those it indirectly affects. The viewer is left with a choice to make after seeing this series: he can be disgusted by all the sadness caused by war or he can find a good example in the characters' courage towards the hardship they are confronted with. (To be honest, and don't you call me a sissy, I was close to tears when I saw the end.)



GUNDAM 0080: WAR IN THE POCKET

by Martin Ouellette

To the reader,

When we began this issue, we thought that we could find a synopsis of "Gundam 0080" quite easily. But it wasn't the case. After a long frustrating search, I decided to do one myself, since we had a very good copy of the script. So I sat and watched 0080 from beginning to end many times, trying to get every detail that I could see. Anyone who has ever read a script will understand that we felt a little queasy about putting one in a magazine (a script is tiresome to read and extremely long; we don't want to bore our readers to tears, do we?)

Also if there are things that you feel are missing, I'm sorry about it. I tried to do my best but I'm not exactly God (sigh!). And before I forget, I'd like to thank Jeffrey Tom who sent us the script, and Kenichiro Tanaka who translated and wrote it, for without them it would have been very hard to do this. So here we go.

S Y N O P S I S

EPISODE I

"HOW MANY MILES TO THE BATTLEFIELD"

Mission: capture, or if this fails, destroy the NewType Gundam the Federation is working on. Use any means necessary. The operation will be launched from a submarine. The use of rockets must be authorized by the commanding officer.

Location: North Pole

Time/Beginning of operation: 15 00 Hours

Type of Mobile Suits: 4 Marine Type Mobile Suits

Operatives code name: Cyclops

Status/Operatives: Expendable

THE ARCTIC, EARTH

The cold, dark and lonely waters of the Arctic. A deep thrumming is suddenly heard accompanied by the long, menacing shape of a Zeon submarine. The operator warns the Cyclops team to ready themselves for launch. Hatches number 2, number 4, number 1 and number 3 (in that order so that the ship doesn't lose its balance) are opened and four Mobile Suits, three MSM-03/C Hygog and one MSM-07/E Zuggock, drop out of the bays. As calm as ever, Captain Schneider gives his orders while smoking a cigarette. Knowing the fondness his old comrade Misha has for alcohol, he warns him not to drink too much. The other two men, Garcia and Andy, take time to prepare themselves to their liking (especially Andy). Once their little preparations are finished, Schneider gives the order to separate in two groups, sending Misha and Garcia to break to the surface while he and Andy follow an underwater tunnel.

On the surface, Misha makes visual contact with the base, opens his hand missile pods and fires his heavy rockets, launching smaller missiles at the same time. Then, he and Garcia begin their search for the Gundam while the base's defenders react to the attack, sending out all available RGM-79 D GM Mobile Suits. Unknown to the defenders though, Schneider and Andy are making their way in the underground tunnels, trying to reach their goal without losing any time. Up on top, the battle continues to rage, with the two Hygog rolling a fearsome kill score. At that moment, Misha fires his hand beam cannon and a lucky shot impacts on the wrist of one of the GM, who ends up shooting itself (the wrist isn't completely cut off and the weight of the gun causes it to do a vertical 360°) straight in the cockpit. Garcia also manages to make an incredible move, using the GM he just downed as a shield against another trigger happy GM who shoots his fallen comrade. But Garcia fires back, destroying the GM and the one he used as a shield.

Having searched the grounds of the base, the two warn Schneider that everything on the surface seems to be a decoy. Andy, getting near the exit of the lift tower where the Captain has sent him, reports that the Federals have readied a shuttle and are loading enormous orange crates in the ship's cargo bay. But he can't do anything about it since a GM is firing on him, pinning him down. Schneider tells him to hang on, that he'll be there in a few seconds to give him cover but Andy insists that the shuttle will get off the ground and attempts to fire his remaining heavy rocket. Unluckily for him, the GM's aim proves to be sure and the shots impact on the Hygog, killing Andy. The machine falls on its back with a crashing metallic sound, jarring the hand rocket mechanism, sending the projectile on the wall behind Schneider's Zuggock, who was a few paces away. The resulting explosion sends Schneider's machine to impact on the Hygog. The two Mobile Suits fall from the tower while the intact shuttle soars up, the

Gundam secured in its cargo hold. Misha and Garcia, helpless and surrounded by a carnage beyond words, realize that they have failed while Schneider, holding Andy's bloodied body, howls a curse to the sky...

SIDE SIX, RHIA COLONY, IN A SCHOOL AT LUNCH TIME

Alfred Izuruha is sitting, eating with his friends Chay and Telcott, disgusted by the synthetic meat hamburgers in front of him. Al and Chay refuse to eat the stuff but Telcott says that it doesn't help to complain about the food and that they should be happy to have something to eat because the war between the Zeon and the Federation is causing a shortage of supplies. With that, he takes his two friend's lunches and starts eating them. Chay turns to Al with a grin, asking him if he wants to see something cool. He takes out a Federation uniform pin and boasts that his brother is a Federation Mobile Suit pilot. Hearing that, a little girl named Dorothy gets up, walks up to them and accuses Chay of lying, insisting that the Federation doesn't have Mobile Suits. The three boys stare at her and declare her dumb and ignorant. Dorothy doesn't take it very well, walks back to them and re-affirms her opinion that they are a bunch of liars. Then Al makes his first mistake. He gets up and reveals to his stunned audience that he actually saw a Mobile Suit at the shipping company where his dad works. "It was black and big and looked really strong!" Dorothy is the first to recover from astonishment and asks him if he can prove his assertion. Al is taken aback by the question and his hesitation is Dorothy's proof (to her!) that they are indeed lying. "I bet that the pin is fake too!" Chay gets up and grabs her. "What?" Dorothy tries to shake Chay's hold on her and in a desperate assault, she kicks him in the you-know-what (ouch!). Al gets up to help his friend and they end up in a tussle. Of course, they are punished (except for Dorothy who is being comforted by the teacher) and made to sit in front of the class. Damn! What a bad day!

As the three guys are walking back home, Chay talks to Al about showing Dorothy. "We need proof, like a picture, or a video of a Mobile Suit". Al promises to try, on one condition: Chay will give him his pin if he can get the proof in question. Al gets home, grabs his video camera and runs out to meet his dad.

At the spaceport, he gives his age, code number and is sent to Gate 23. On the way, he sneaks around, makes his way to the cargo hold and begins to film. But to his dismay, there are only big orange crates being unloaded. Suddenly, a worker spots him and Al finds a good excuse for his presence in this unauthorized area ("I'm looking for a washroom, is there one nearby?"). The worker gives him directions and Al goes (quite relieved, I'd say) to meet his father, while in the cargo hold, the workers open one of the orange containers, revealing the head of a Gundam...

IN A RESTAURANT

Al is sitting in front of his dad, who asks him how his mom is doing and how his test for the third grade went. Al answers that everything is fine and his dad gives him a letter for his mother. "Make sure you don't drop it" he cautions. After eating, Al gets on his way home and meets Christina Mackenzie (in fact, he bumps into her) a beautiful red haired young woman who used to be Al's neighbor when he was younger. Overjoyed at seeing Al again, Chris (as she likes to be called) invites him home, serves him tea. She explains that she's in the Federation's military and that she got transferred so suddenly, that her mother had to do all of the paperwork for her immigration. After his chat with Chris, Al goes back home for dinner (he doesn't eat much though) and goes to his room supposedly to do his homework (but in fact he plays video games). His mom enters his room and tells him to go straight to bed when he's finished with his homework. Al's answer is "HAI" (which means YES in Japanese) and when his mom closes the door, he begins to destroy the city in the video game, saying "HAI" 20 times while doing so (he's an obedient kid, isn't he?).

Next morning, Al wakes up and starts filming Chris, who seems very amused by this. Walking along with Al, Chris asks him if school is as bad as he says. Al answers "It's worse. Classes are boring, there's a lot of homework, and the teacher makes me stand in the hallway". Chris seems quite sympathetic to his cause but when she tells Al that he still has Junior and Senior High School to go through, he says "I haven't thought that far in the future".

At school, Al tells that he couldn't get the footage they needed and Chay says that he just can't give his pin for that (Well, there's only big orange crates on Al's tape. We know what's inside but they don't!). Dorothy then walks up to the guys and shows them the collection of pins she was able to get for a ridiculous price at a toy store. "You're so stupid, putting so much value in these cheap things." Chay yells "Shut up" but his scream is covered by an enormous explosion that rattles the walls. Looking in the direction where it came from, the kids see a GM Mobile Suit (a "RGM-79 G GM Command" to be exact) stepping from behind a group of buildings (that's when we see how big Mobile Suits really are. Gulp!). Unluckily, it looks up too late to see a Zaku firing at him and gets hit by a shower of 120 mm slugs. The GM falls down (on the buildings, of course) with a resounding crash while in another part of the battlefield, a Rick Dom II fires a sturm faust rocket at another GM Command trying to get cover behind a building. The building explodes, leaving the GM wide open for the fire of a retreating Zaku. Another Zaku fights his way through a refinery, when a GM succeeds in damaging it sufficiently for the pilot to disengage. Making enormous thruster leaps, the machine gets near where the kids are hiding (to the point that they think it's going to hit them) and makes another leap, going over the kids. Al



Raymond P Campiglio (Order #33181648)

hand and we'll accept the cargo disguised as civilians. All you have to do is fly through the battle zone and land the craft (Ed. Is he kidding?) Questions?" (Ed. Yes, how do I get out of this f... team?) Bernie, obviously, gets uneasy and asks if he won't be shot by friendly fire. Misha and Garcia laugh their buns off. Schneider retorts that he doesn't need morons who get shot by friendly fire in this unit (the two other bozos are really having fun now!). "Any other questions?" Bernie, white as a ghost, says "No". Schneider gives the last details: "The operation is code-named Rubicon. To commence at 23 00 hours. That's all."

ALFRED IN HIS TEACHER'S OFFICE

The teacher talks to Al about his grades (they are really bad!). Al stares at the ground and she tells him to look at her when she's talking. She adds that if his school results don't improve, she will have to speak to his mother. Al seems dejected.

LUNCH TIME AT AL'S SCHOOL

Al enters the cafeteria and gets verbally assaulted by Chay who wants to know what the witch (the teacher) said or did to him (She sure doesn't look like a witch. She's beautiful!). Al answers that the teacher threatened to tell his parents about his marks and if that happens, he'll be grounded for a month. Chay replies that Al's parents are much too strict.

Back home, Al's mother tells him that he looks depressed and asks him if someone's picking on him. Al responds that there's nothing wrong, as his mom asks him if he will get his test scores back soon. Al's guts freeze. Later, in his room, Al is thinking "She's sharp...". Feeling bored, he suddenly remembers Bernie's fallen Zaku, which is still in the park. Al steps out the window but Chris, out to get her cat, surprises him and asks what he's doing out so late. Al answers that he and his friends are going out on a dare, begging her not to say anything to his mom. Chris promises but asks him if he'll take her with him next time. Remembering he gave his word to Bernie, Al says that girls aren't allowed and runs off to find the Zaku in the park. Once there, he climbs the thing, looks inside the cockpit, loses his footing and falls in the pilot seat. His foot apparently snags a control somewhere, because the hatch closes and then the screens light up. Overjoyed, Al puts on Bernie's badge and starts to laugh.

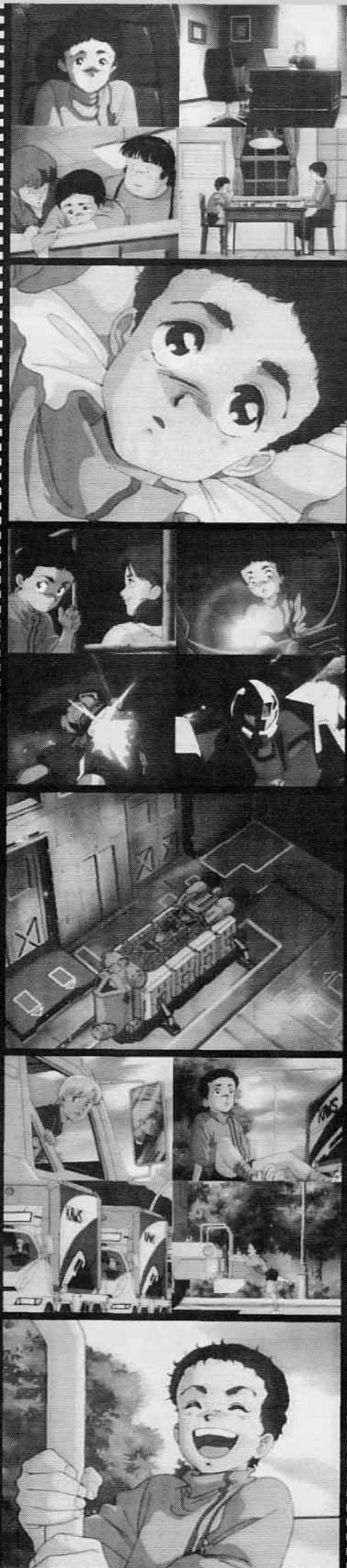
ZEON LUNAR BASE

Bernie is sitting in the cockpit of a Zeon ship disguised as a civilian craft. Two workers get in, carrying another man with them. Bernie is a little curious "What's that?". The worker nearest him replies "A corpse". They install the

body on the seat next to him. Bernie pulls a face and starts to talk to the dead guy "Hey, how're you doing? Neither of us seems to be doing too well, huh?" As he turns around, he sees the two men handling a big gun which they aim directly at the cockpit. Without any hesitation, they shoot the dead man straight in the head, adding more realism to the setup. Bernie cringes as he looks at the blown-up face and is startled when the operator tells him to launch his ship when ready. As he launches, the captain of the mother ship gives the order to send out the Mobile Suits. Bernie clears the Zeon space zone and gets close to the colony when the diversion battle starts, the first sign being when the arm of a space type GM (the red one, RGM-79 GS space type GM Command) narrowly misses him. When he gets to the middle of the battlefield, he sees a nearby Zaku getting shot while a Rick Dom II launches two hyper-bazooka rockets straight in the back of a GM who's propelled forward by the blast. Somewhere else, a red MS-14 JG Gelgoog Jäger evades the fire of another GM with its incredible maneuverability. Another Zaku gets cut in half at the waist by the beam saber of a GM (about the only time a GM gets to hit something). Bernie, caught in the center of all this, pretends to request protection and the permission to land. A GM accompanies him near the landing bay but gets blown away by the red Gelgoog. Having made it safely in the bay, Bernie complains to the customs official about having to go through a rough fight to get to his destination. The official stays cold and methodical, asking Bernie for his papers. Bernie becomes anxious when one of his documents is missing, forcing the official to call for a team of inspectors to check his cargo. Schneider's arrival interrupts all this and when he asks the official for authorization to take the cargo anyway, his salt water act convinces the guy to grant permission to do so. As he, Bernie, Misha and Garcia are going, the official shouts: "We're backed up because of the war; from now on, get your documents together, all right?"

AL RUNNING HOME

Al wakes up in the fallen Zaku's cockpit and seeing the sunrise, he nearly loses his mind at the thought of what will happen if his mom catches him. In fact, he's so terrified by this eventuality that he forgets what he's doing and almost gets runned over by a truck. The enormous multi-wheel nearly slides off the road but at the last second, the driver regains control of his rig. The driver pokes his head out the window and yells some very indecent things at the rash boy. Al looks at him and then, they recognize each other. "The kid with the camera!" thinks Bernie, just as Al realizes "It's the Zeon pilot!". Bernie, a little nervous at the idea of being recognized, accelerates. Al misses Bernie's truck but grips Garcia's on the fly (Boy, does that kid run or what!). Al says "They came. The Zeon came to this colony. They came for me!" and then he starts to laugh.



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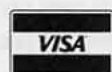
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GUNDAM CHARACTERS

by Martin Ouellette

ALFRED IZURUHA (AL):



Alfred Izuruha (Al): A 10 years old boy attending elementary school in the fifth grade on the neutral space colony of Side 6. Al is very curious about the war between the Earth Federation and the Zeon Archduchy and is especially curious about anything concerning the Mobile Suits. Al has a defiant and courageous (if not a little hot headed) nature which often puts him in tight spots, such as when he boasts to his school buddies that he can see a Mobile Suit anytime he wants because his father works in the space docks. This is a declaration he soon regrets when his friends do not believe him and ask him to prove his claims by recording images of a Suit, any Suit that he will see. Of course, Al is resourceful and is able to record the footages (well, not exactly what he wanted but close enough!). He trades them for a Zeon pilot insignia, something he got from Bernie, a young Zeon Zaku pilot who was shot down during an operation in the colony where Al lives.

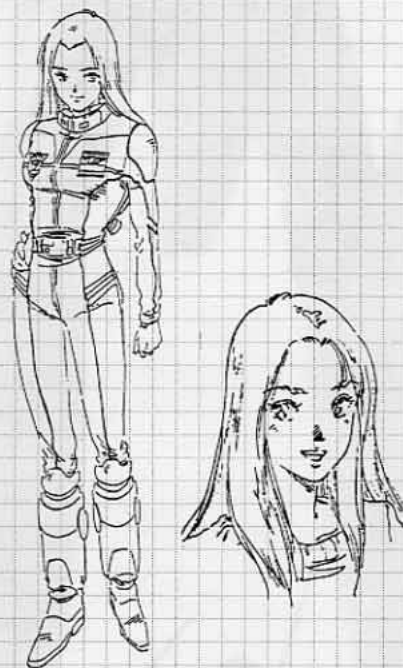
Eventually Al becomes great friends with Bernie and gets involved in the war (to the point of being a traitor). To his great disappointment, Al soon discovers that war isn't the glorious and fun game he thought it was. He will also find out that war can rob you of the two most important things in the world when you're a child: your best friend and your innocence...

TELCOTT, CHAY AND DOROTHY:



Telcott, Chay and Dorothy: Al's classmates, these three are partly responsible for his involvement in the war. Al's desire to satisfy their curiosity (and at the same time boast in front of them) will put him in a very tight spot. They are totally unaware of Al's relationship with Bernie and of the torment caused by his best friend's death. For them, war is still a wonderful and exciting game. What they don't understand is the price paid for such a game. Al knows that price only too well.

CHRISTINA MACKENZIE (CHRIS):



Christina Mackenzie (Chris): An attractive red haired young woman with sparkling blue eyes and a quick smile, Chris is a Lieutenant in the Earth Federation's military and the test pilot of the RX-78 NT-1 GUNDAM. Chris was working on the NT-1 project at the Federation research base at the North Pole but had to flee with the half completed GUNDAM when the base was attacked by the Cyclops team, a Zeon special elite forces group. Chris used to live near Alfred's home when she was a kid but had to go on Earth for her job. The only reason for her presence on Side 6 is that the GUNDAM is there.

She develops a special relationship with Al, treating him like a little brother. She also seem to have a certain fondness for Al's "half-brother" Bernie (you've got to be kidding!) and certainly does everything in her power to make him feel welcome after a rather "bumpy" beginning. At the end of episode 6, Chris is seriously wounded while fighting a Gundam (Bernie's Zak!) and manages to make it out of the GUNDAM cockpit barely alive. She will never know that the Zak she destroyed was piloted by Bernie and will go back to Earth unaware of Al's grief for his lost friend.

BERNARD WEISMAN (BERNIE):

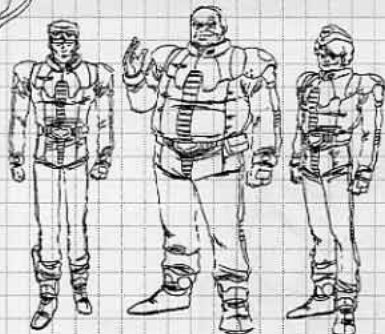


Bernard Weisman (Bernie): A Zeon Mobile Suit pilot with very little experience, Bernie is shot down during an operation on Side 6 where he miraculously manages to get footage of the GUNDAM the Zeon high command has been looking for. That footage will give him a promotion into the Cyclops team upon his return to the fleet. Ordered to be a part of the operation to abduct or destroy the RX-78 NT-1 GUNDAM, Bernie will meet two persons who will change his life. First, Alfred who will bring him back to his childhood. Al will show him what a happy and blissful thing childhood can be. Bernie will, in many ways, become Al's big brother sharing everything with him, even the dangers of his missions.

And then, there will be Chris, Al's neighbor and friend. A beautiful red haired young woman who will make him regret that he never had a girlfriend. Sadly, Bernie will die for nothing, trying to destroy the GUNDAM (piloted by Chris, although he doesn't know it) despite the fact that war is already over. His death will forever be etched in Al's memory, proving to him that war isn't a game.



THE "CYCLOP TEAM":



The "Cyclop Team": The "Cyclop team" is an elite special forces group usually assigned to secret operations and undercover missions. These men are old, rough soldiers capable of anything to complete a job. The team is comprised of:

CAPTAIN SCHNEIDER:



Captain Schneider: The wise leader of the Cyclops team, Captain Schneider is a man of honor and principle with a peculiar outlook on life. Now in his fifties, Schneider and the rest of the Cyclops team are considered to be expendable by his superiors. In fact, Schneider's team was sent to Side 6 for one reason only: create an incident big enough so the Federation would send out the GUNDAM thus proving to the Zeon high command its presence on Side 6, allowing them to implement their real plan.

Even when aware of this, Schneider will continue his mission no matter what if only to prove, both to himself and his superiors, that he still can do the job required of

him. His sense of duty and honor will cost him his life at the end of episode 4. Captain Schneider is, without any doubt, one of "Gundam 0080's" most interesting and likeable character.

-ANDY:



-Andy: the playboy of the team. A very good pilot, Andy dies during an attack on a North Pole base while at the commands of his MSM-03/C "HYGOG".

-MISHA:



-Misha: whose bad habit is drinking on the job. Misha is suicidal when at the commands of a Mobile Suit, and will accept any mission that will permit him to see some good old fightin'. Unfortunately for him, at the end of episode 4, he encounters the RX-78 NT-1 GUNDAM "Alex", an enemy whom his MS-18 E "Kämpfer" is powerless against.

- GARCIA:



- Garcia: whose looks say everything about him, including the fact that he's a tiny wee bit sadistic. He's not very friendly but he's such a good soldier that he always manages to pull out of any situation. He dies at the end of episode 4 while trying to set explosives on the GUNDAM.



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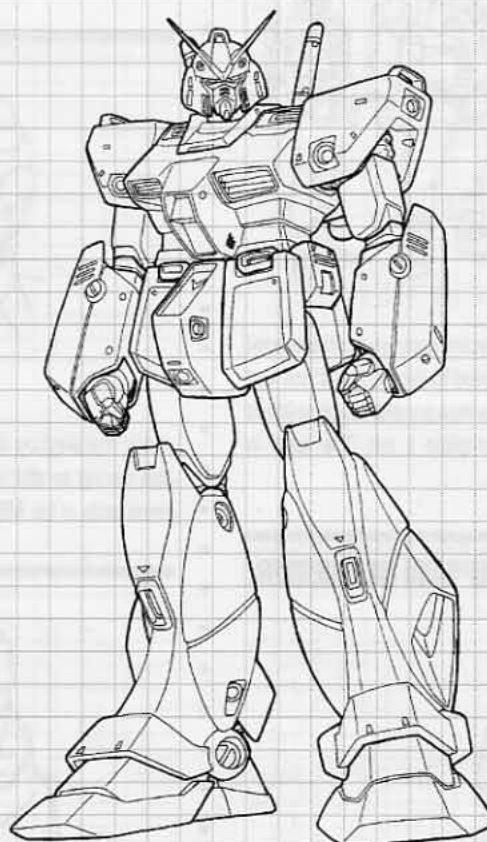
RX-78 NT-1 GUNDAM (ALEX):

RX-78 NT-1 Gundam (ALEX): The highly redesigned version of the original RX-78 Gundam from GUNDAM MS, the ALEX sports an all new "high tech" look that truly works. Taller (18.00 meters) than the original mecha, it is also broader and a lot more fearsome. But the three biggest changes are maneuverability, cockpit and weaponry. The number of thrusters (both primary and apogee) have more than doubled, the articulations are greatly improved (because of the "magnetic coating") for a better movement ratio. Surprisingly, the NT-1 is not equipped with a Core Fighter Block system. The reason for this is the presence of a 360° linear seat cockpit, in the same style as the ones seen in "Nu GUNDAM: Char's counterattack". As for the weaponry, it was totally modified, the new beam gun and beam saber being up to par with the mecha's new appearance.

For the close combat weapons, changes have been made. Although the 60 mm head cannons remain, two 90 mm tri-tube gatling guns now complete the armament. They are installed on each forearm and make for a very nice surprise when they pop up and start firing! The enemy is always amused when receiving a storm of 90 mm depleted uranium slugs right in his cockpit!

Originally, the NT-1 was to be delivered to Amuro Rey (the first Gundam pilot) but the end of the war prevented that. The beam rifle and the shield had been constructed but encountered the same fate than the mecha. In the animation, the ALEX is handled by Christina Mackenzie (a test pilot from Anaheim Electronics attached to the Federation military) and is badly damaged during a fight at the end of episode six (the last one). Strangely enough, the Gundam NT-1 is seen only four times in the series.

Manufacturer: Anaheim Electronics/Federation Machine Werks
 Total height: 18.00 meters
 Shoulder height: 15.90 meters
 Dry weight: 40.00 tons
 Full combat weight: 72.50 tons
 Apogee motors: 19
 Engine output: 35,000 kg x2 - 8,000 kg x6 - 7,000 kg x2
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 132,000 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 5,900 meters
 Weaponry: beam gun, beam sabers x2, 90 mm gatling cannons x2 (forearm mounted), 60 mm guns x2 (head), shield

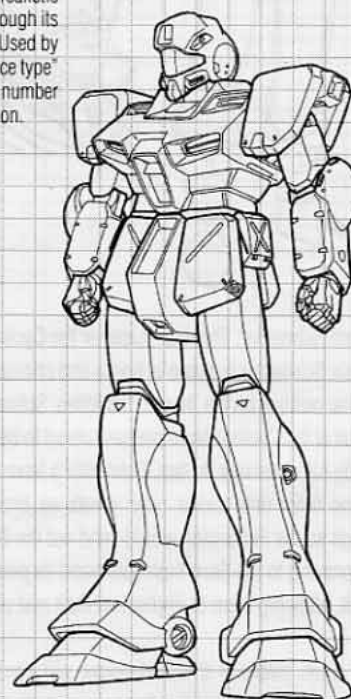
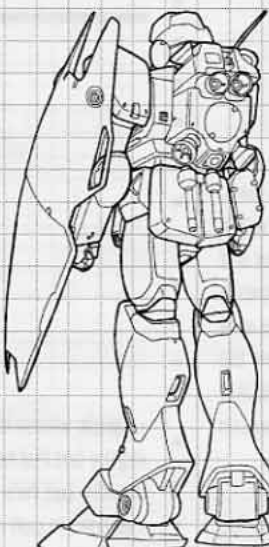


RGM-79 G GM / 79 GS GM:

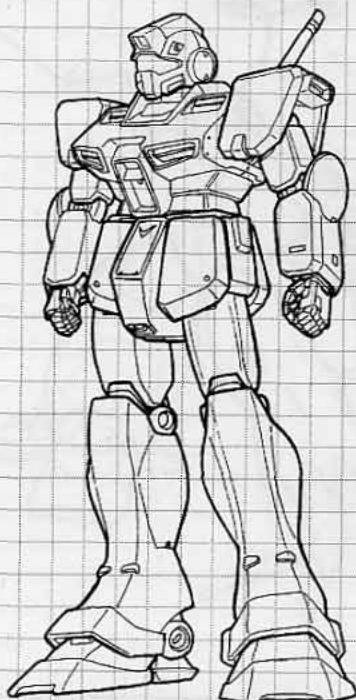
RGM-79 GM Command: One of the best looking mecha in 0080 (with the Kämpfer and the Hygog), the GM Command is, also, one of the most realistic Mobile Suit in Gundam. A modification on the GM-79 from the old MS series, this mecha was almost totally reworked on the technical side although its general appearance hasn't really change when compared to the old GM. The changes consist of added thrust, maneuverability and fire power. Used by the ordinary grunts, this machine, although better than its older sibling, always gets easily blown away. A special version, the RGM-79 GS "space type" was conceived especially for space combat, carrying almost twenty extra tons of propellant (fuel) for flight missions longer than usual and the number of apogee motors is, of course, higher than the standard GM Command. Those two mecha (the GM and GS type) are seen often in the animation.

RGM-79 G GM: Manufacturer: Anaheim Electronics
 Total height: 18.00 meters
 Shoulder height: 15.50 meters
 Dry weight: 43.50 tons
 Full combat weight: 56.40 tons
 Apogee motors: 10
 Engine output: 26,500 kg x2, 7,000 kg x2
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 67,000 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 6,000 meters
 Weaponry: 120 mm rifle cannon, beam sabers x2, 60 mm cannons x2 (head), shield.

RGM-79 GS GM: Manufacturer: Anaheim Electronics
 Total height: 18.00 meters
 Shoulder height: 15.50 meters
 Dry weight: 44.60 tons
 Full combat weight: 76.50 tons
 Apogee motors: 14
 Engine output: 21,000 kg x2, 16,000 kg x2
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 74,000 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 6,000 meters
 Weaponry: beam rifle, beam sabers x2, 60 mm cannons x2 (head), shield



RGM-79 D GM:



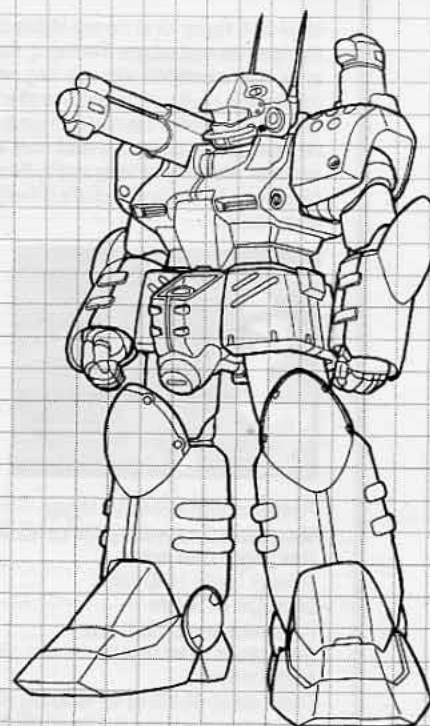
RGM-79 D GM: The older version of the GM Command, the GM D is less armored and cheaper to produce than the Command type GM. Being a lower grade mecha implies a smaller number of thrusters, a more dated style of weaponry as well as aleatory maneuverability and protection against enemy fire. On the appearance side, the differences with the GM Command are evident. The head and back pack unit are completely different while the torso is slightly less armored and there is only one beam saber. The GM D is seen only in the first five minutes of the first episode of the animation.



Production code: RGM-79 D GM
 Manufacturer: Anaheim Electronics
 Total height: 18.00 meters
 Shoulder height: 15.50 meters
 Dry weight: 44.70 tons
 Full combat weight: 58.70 tons
 Apogee motors: 5
 Engine output: 15,000 kg x4
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 60,000 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 5,790 meters
 Weaponry: 120 mm machine gun (with optional rocket launcher), beam saber, 60 mm guns x2 (head), shield.

RX-77 D GUN=CANNON:

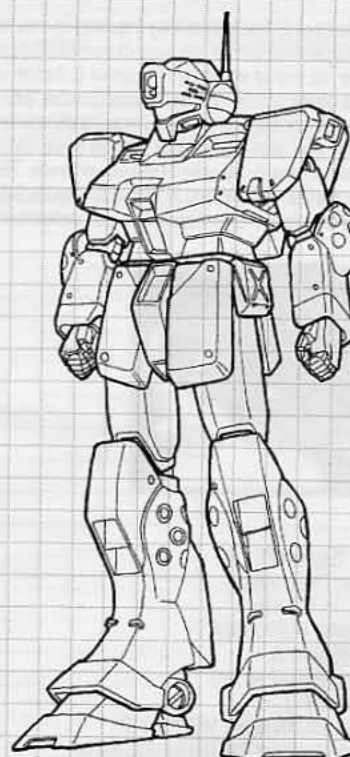
RX-77 D Gun-Cannon: The RX-77 D is a much redesigned version of the original Gun-Cannon from GUNDAM MS. Better propulsion and articulations, as well as greater fire power are part of this new design. The thrusters, all fifteen of them, give the mecha a maneuverability approaching that of the Gundam (in space) and the new articulations are much more humanoid than those of the first Gun-Cannon, allowing for very good movement and revolving radius. Likewise, the armament was improved, the fire power of the shoulder beam cannons being almost doubled and instead of being fixed on the shoulders, they are mounted on the back pack unit and are retractable. The color of the mecha (a blazing red) is unchanged. We see the Gun-Cannon one time during the animation (episode five).



Production code: RX-77 D Gun Cannon
 Manufacturer: Anaheim Electronics
 Total height: 18.00 meters
 Shoulder height: 15.90 meters
 Dry weight: 45.00 tons
 Full combat weight: 61.00 tons
 Apogee motors: 8
 Engine output: 21,000 kg x2, 15,000 kg x4
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 102,000 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 8,700 meters
 Weaponry: retractable beam cannons x2, beam rifle, 60 mm cannons x2 (head).

RGM-79 SP SNIPER CUSTOM II:

RGM-79 SP Sniper Custom II: A highly specialized version of the GM D, the Sniper Custom II is used mostly as a long range, high maneuverability attack unit against ships and such. They often serve as security and surveillance Mobile Suits on bases and Sides. If we look closely, the difference from the standard GM is quite evident, even to the untrained eye. They consist in: a head with a special visor that can be lowered to protect the primary viewpane, maneuver thruster units on the legs and upper body, a much bigger back pack unit, extra communication and sensory gears as well as a special long barreled beam gun which can fire at very long range. The mecha also sports thicker armor than the other GM's. The Sniper Custom II is seen only once in the series (episode five).



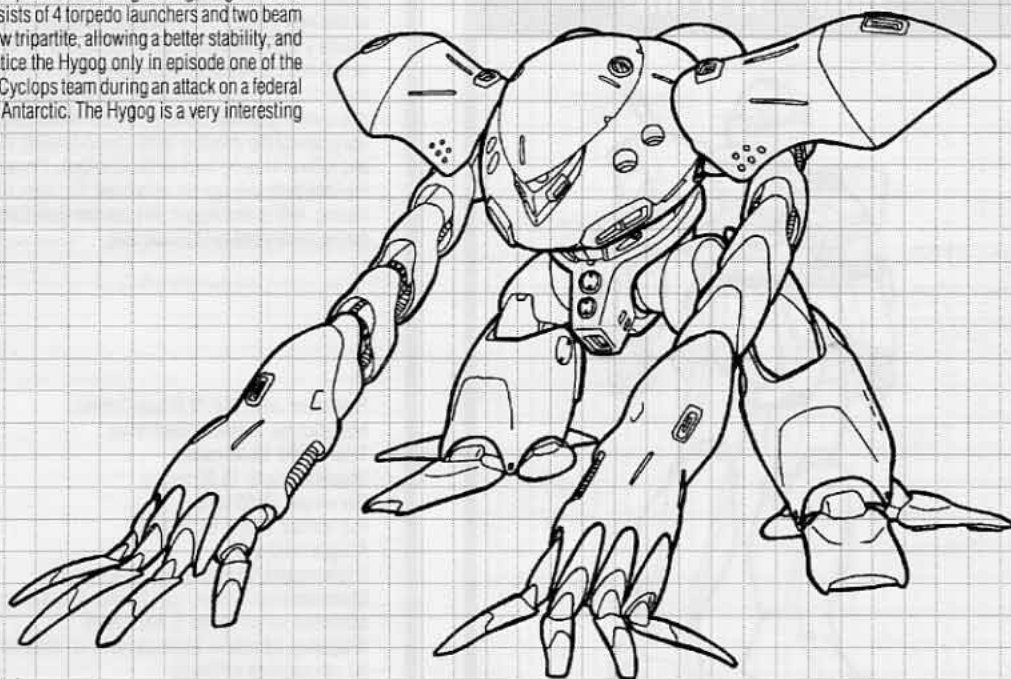
Production code: RGM-79 SP "GM Sniper Custom II"
 Manufacturer: Anaheim Electronics
 Total height: 18.00 meters
 Shoulder height: 15.50 meters
 Dry weight: 51.10 tons
 Full combat weight: 70.20 tons
 Apogee motors: 5
 Engine output: 26,500 kg x3, 7,000 kg x2
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 93,500 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 7,300 meters
 Weaponry: long range beam rifle, beam sabers x2, 60 mm cannons x2 (head), shield.

MSM-03/C HYGOG:

MSM-03/C Hygog: Of all the new Mobile Suits, the differences between the MS GOG and the 0080 Hygog are the most extreme. The Hygog, mechanically speaking, functions basically in the same way as its older counterpart, with very long extendable arms capable of holding a long range missile (contained in a bulky orange pod). The other armament consists of 4 torpedo launchers and two beam cannons (one inside the palm of each hand). The feet are now tripartite, allowing a better stability, and the movements of the legs are much more versatile. We notice the Hygog only in episode one of the animation, while they are being used by the members of the Cyclops team during an attack on a federal base (where the Gundam is actually hidden) situated in the Antarctic. The Hygog is a very interesting mecha design.

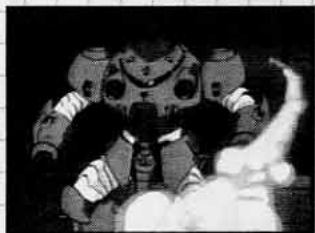


Production code: MSM-03/C Hygog
 Manufacturer: Zeon military (Marine MS division)
 Total height: 15.40 meters
 Shoulder height: 14.40 meters
 Dry weight: 54.50 tons
 Full combat weight: 79.20 tons
 (with optional rocket launcher and back pack unit)
 Apogee motors: 9
 Engine output: 38,000 kg x2, 10,000 kg x1
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 86,000 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 3,000 meters
 Weaponry: beam guns (palms of the hands) x2, torpedoes x4, optional missile launchers x2 (heavy missiles).

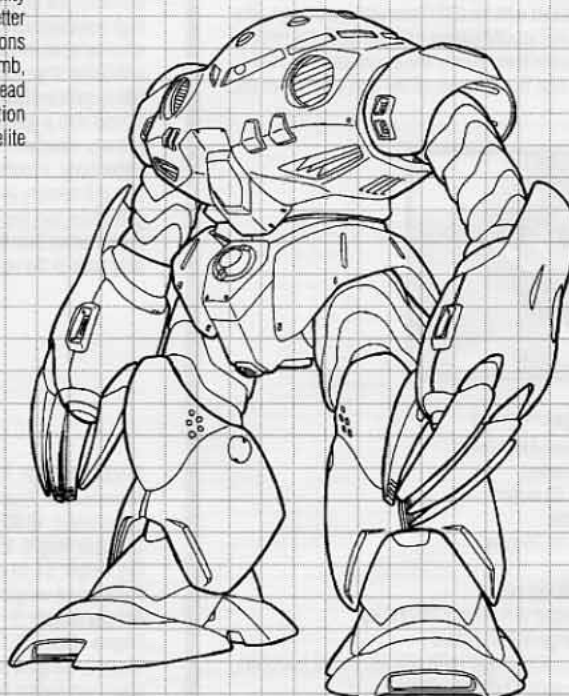


MSM-07/E ZUGGOCK E:

MSM-07/E Zugcock E: The Zeon military improved on their marine Mobile Suits, as well as their standard units. Optimized for underwater combat, the Zugcock from MS Gundam was redesigned for better armor, maneuverability and fire power, as well as versatility. The armor is thicker but lighter in weight, the maneuverability is better because of the greater number of thruster ports (2 on the "MS" version against 9 for the "0080") and articulations joint systems (mainly longer arms). The pincer hands now have a disposition which, with an opposable thumb, helps in a better manipulation of objects. The fire power stays the same, with 6 torpedoes launchers in the head and two beam cannons in the palm of the pincer hands. The unique Zugcock E that we see in the animation (episode one, the first five minutes) is piloted by Captain Schneider, group leader of the Cyclops team (an elite group usually assigned to secret operations and undercover missions).



MSM-07/E "Zugcock E"
 Manufacturer: Zeon military
 Total height: 18.40 meters
 Shoulder height: 17.60 meters
 Dry weight: 69.50 tons
 Full combat weight: 88.90 tons
 Apogee motors: 9
 Engine output: 20,000 kg x4, 16,000 kg x2
 Maximum engine output (full thrust): 112,000 kg
 Maximum sensor range: 3,000 meters
 Weaponry: beam cannons (palms of the hands) x2, torpedoes x6, pincer hands x2.



MS-06 FZ "ZAKU FZ":

MS-06 FZ "Zaku FZ": One of the two mechas from GUNDAM 0080 that have changed the least compared to their original counterparts (the other being the MS-09 Rick Dom II), it nonetheless was redesigned to look more modern and powerful. The maneuverability has been tremendously increased (the number of apogee motors and a better joint system are mainly responsible for that) along with a much greater range than the first Zaks. It goes without saying that the armor was upgraded too, both in efficiency and weight. The armament has also been greatly modified. The gun unit is not a beam gun but a conventional ammo 120 mm cannon, which can be fitted with a rocket launcher while a rack containing three hand grenades is attached on the right side of the waist. The well known "heat axe" stayed the same as on the original. An interesting detail is that the standard Zak head can be replaced by a "Storm Trooper" style unit, which greatly resembles the helmet of the World War II German soldier. The units sporting that head often have, as a part of their equipments, a "Sturm Faust" (rocket launcher, also of German inspiration) which is utilized for heavy assault purposes. The Zaku FZ is seen during the entire animation series of '0080: War in the pocket' being the mecha of one of the main character, Bernard (Bernie) Weisman.



ZProduction code: MS-06 FZ "Zaku FZ"

Manufacturer: Zeon military

Total height: 17.50 meters

Shoulder height: 16.40 meters

Dry weight: 56.20 tons

Full combat weight: 74.50 tons

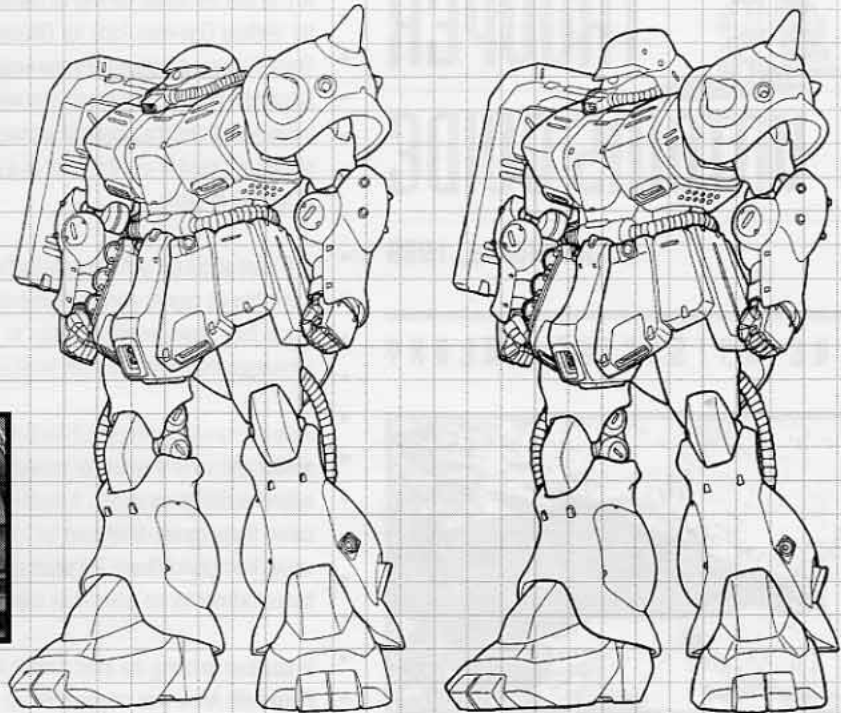
Apogee motors: 14

Engine output: 24,500 kg x3, 3,000 kg x2

Maximum engine output (full thrust): 78,500 kg

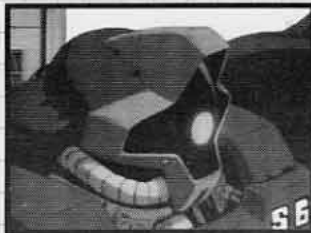
Maximum sensor range: 3,200 meters

Weaponry: 120 mm machine gun (with optional rocket launcher), hand grenades x3, heat axe, shoulder shield (right side).



MS-09 RII RICK DOM II:

MS-09 RII Rick Dom II: The Rick Dom (from MS Gundam) and the Rick Dom II primarily differ in cosmetics. Despite changes in speed and maneuverability, the original MS-09 and 0080's MS-09 RII are almost identical both in armor and weapons selection. Even colors are the same. The big differences are that the Rick Dom II lacks a heat saber and that the thrusters output is more than doubled that of the original Suit, which allows the mecha to stay out of melee range (without a hand-to-hand weapon, it becomes a must). We often see the Rick Dom II in the animation but mostly during very confused space combat scenes, so it's understandable if people did not notice that particular Mobile Suit.



Production code: MS-09 RII "Rick Dom II"

Manufacturer: Zeon military

Total height: 18.60 meters

Shoulder height: 16.90 meters

Dry weight: 45.60 tons

Full combat weight: 79.90 tons

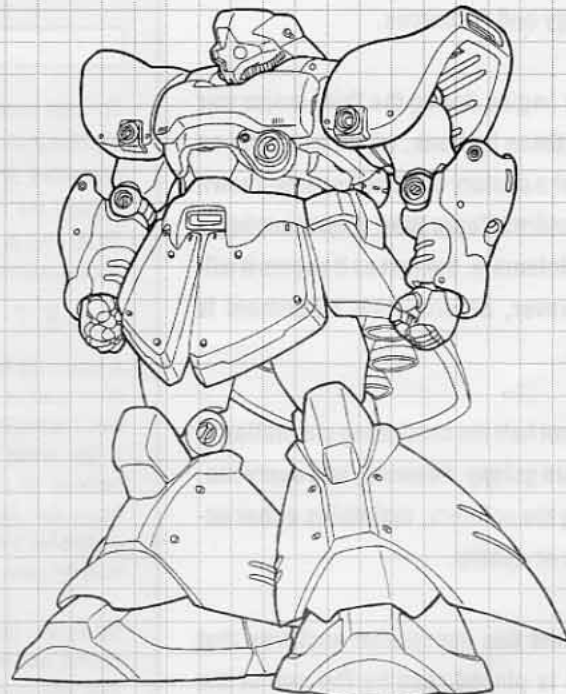
Apogee motors: 9

Engine output: 21,000 kg x5, 2,500 kg x2

Maximum engine output (full thrust): 110,000 kg

Maximum sensor range: 5,400 meters

Weaponry: 360 mm bazooka, Sturm Faust.





ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS GUIDE

©Tim Eldred, 1989

THE ASTRAGIUS GALAXY



For thousands of years in its history, the Astragius Galaxy has been at war, as the Gilgameth and Balalant armies fight a never-ending struggle for supremacy. Also placed within the standoff is the Merukian Army, an ally with the Gilgameth side that shares technology and resources.

The story begins during the third major war between these factions, which has gone on for almost a century and has become known as the Hundred Years War. It has reached a point of stalemate, but just as it seems it will go on forever, an armistice agreement is reached.

This cannot halt the continuing stagnation of the wartorn galaxy, however, and everyone, including the soldiers, maintains either acceptance or apathy.

It is against this oppressive backdrop that VOTOMS is placed, and by the end of the series, events will conspire to decide the very future of the Astragius Galaxy.

ARMORED TROOPERS

It is from the Armored Troopers (hereafter referred to as A.T.'s) that the series derives its name. VOTOMS stands for Vertical One-man Tank for Offense and Maneuvers. The A.T.'s were developed as a new weapon in the Balalant/Gilgameth conflict, and became so widely used that they virtually changed the history of warfare. It is the mark of a skilled A.T. pilot to use the robot as a physical extension of himself in battle.

A.T.'s are also a fairly disposable battle machine. Chirico Cuvie has no regrets about totalling one to save himself, since they seem relatively easy to come by (Gotho scrounges them together from local junkyards!)

They are manufactured by both the Gilgameth and Balalant armies and serve a variety of scenarios by virtue of their extensive design variations. A more esoteric line of A.T.'s called Berserga are developed for the sole use of mercenaries from planet Quent, but seem slightly removed from the battlefield for no adequately explored reason.

In addition to being the most prolific A.T. designers, the Gilgameth Army was responsible for the major technological element that made them such an important weapon—the visor assembly. The sensor scopes on the face of the A.T. are directly linked to the pilot's goggles, allowing greater perception of his surroundings, thus making him far more agile in a battle situation. The A.T.'s are also individually equipped with accessories, such as hydraulic armored punch and roller dash capabilities.

RED SHOULDER BATTALION

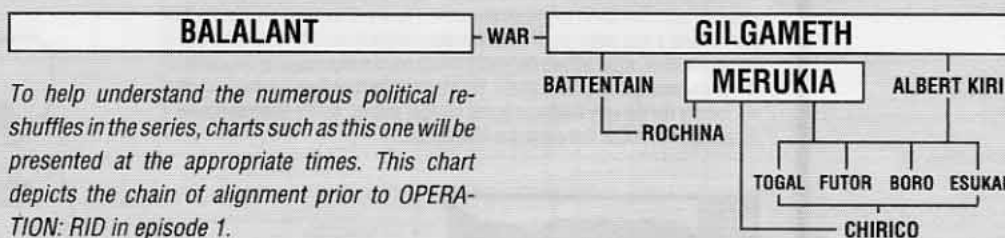
(MDSF: MERUKIAN DIVISIONS SPECIAL FORCES
24TH DETACHMENT X-1)



An elite group of highly-skilled A.T. pilots employed by the Merukians as a supreme strikeforce similar to green berets. Under strict orders by their superiors, Red Shoulders earned an infamous reputation as cruel, ruthless killers and the nickname 'bloodsucker squad'.

In reality, the commanding officers often used them as tools to further their own ambition. Ordering the Red Shoulders to destroy a village, city, or even an entire planet guaranteed its annihilation. The code of the Red Shoulders was unquestioning loyalty or death, so many of them became the cold machines their reputation demanded.

Now that an armistice is reached, however, Red Shoulder Battalion has officially disbanded, mainly to put an end to the atrocities it performed in the battlefield. The few surviving members are regarded with fear and respect wherever they appear.



PERFECT SOLDIER

A genetically-bred warrior developed by the Gilgameth Army to act as a new super-weapon against the opposition. The first Perfect Soldier was a female named Proto-1. She awoke on the Merukian Asteroid RID and was captured by men commanded by Gilgameth General Albert Kiri. After intense study, Kiri's Secret Society created her successor, Proto-2, using the funds stolen from the same asteroid.

The Perfect Soldier is an expert warrior in all types of combat, and is especially talented in the use of A.T.'s. They also require periodic re-energizing jijirium baths, which creates a dependency upon their masters in addition to keeping them in top form at all times.

OPERATION: RID

The secret, illegal mission masterminded by Albert Kiri of the Gilgameth Army. In a raid on the Merukian Asteroid RID, A.T. pilots under his command stole both a huge gold stock and the freshly-created Proto-1. The leaders of this operation then defected from the Gilgameth Army and formed the Secret Society, each taking a responsible persona to hide behind (Boro becomes a holy man, Esukai a police chief, etc.).

They go on to develop their own Perfect Soldier, Proto-2, and pursue their own greedy interests in an attempt to stake their own claim on a galaxy destabilized by constant warfare.

CHIRICO CUVIE



The central character of VOTOMS. Chirico is an A.T. pilot and soldier for the Merukian Army. As a member of Red Shoulder Battalion, he was an enigma and never quite 'fit the mold'. As a result, he was demoted to smaller military assignments after the disbanding, which led to his involvement in OPERATION: RID under Albert Kiri. Kiri uses this situation to have him eliminated, but Chirico survives the attempt on his life to escape with full knowledge of Kiri's actions against his own army.

The most mysterious element of Chirico's psyche is the effect the war and all its atrocities has had on him. He was never the killing machine his superiors pushed him to be, and is now haunted by violent flashback which he is forced to overcome as he becomes the object of pursuit.

As the series begins, no one is aware of exactly who or what Chirico is. The army has no record of his past, and likewise Chirico himself remembers nothing before his tenth year. In reality, his incredible stamina and resourcefulness are the result of his unknown heritage, the truth of which becomes his ultimate quest.

All these mysteries attract the attention of several high-ranking persons, and when Chirico deserts the Merukian Army in episode one, many parties become involved in the 52-episode manhunt.

MECHANICAL DESIGN KUNIO OKAWARA

Kunio Okawara has become one of the most respected and imitated mecha designers in anime, having worked on virtually every major program from GUNDAM to DRAGONAR. But to this day, VOTOMS remains his favorite.

Part of the reason was the time frame. Fresh from GUNDAM and DOUGRAM, he had established three basic criteria his next set of designs would follow.

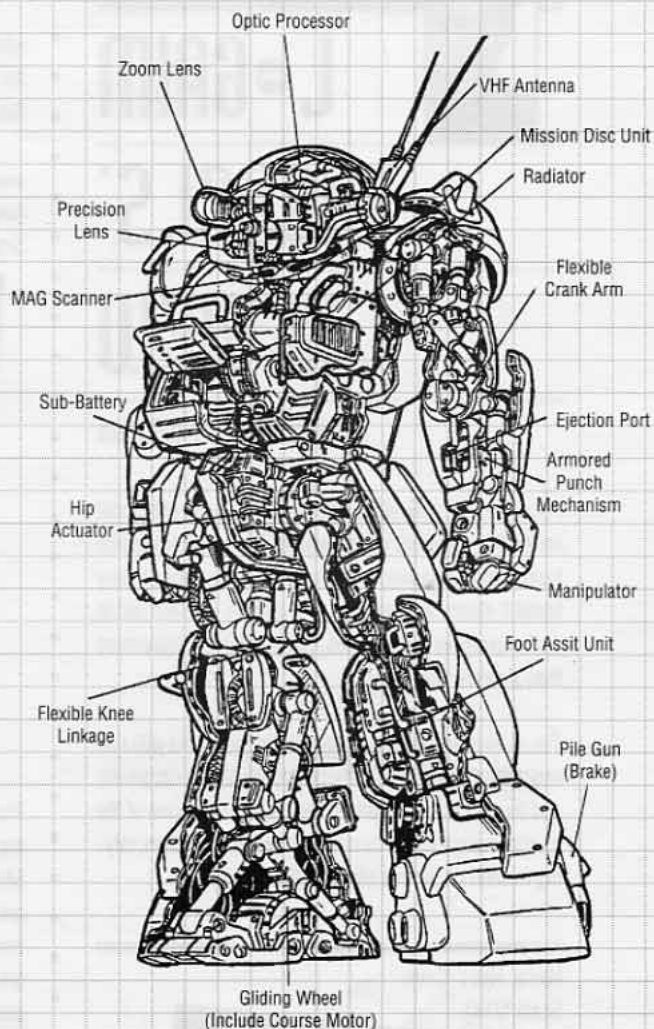
"First," he explains, "when we would eventually produce the products (models, toys, etc. derived from the series) they had to pose exactly as designed without modification."

"Second, we wanted something smaller in scale than the DOUGRAM robots, which were too big."

"Third, it had to look as if it were made in a factory today."

Once established, these three ideas resulted in some of the most appealing, certainly the most realistic, robot designs from that era of anime. Designing them in terms of products in advance of the series was a new approach at that time, and added an incredible degree of logic.

Later, however, when it came time to design new robots for the videos, some of the concepts were set aside in favor of 'characterizing' the newer mecha for the sake of the story. But Okawara justly takes pride in the quality of his original designs that rise a cut above even the standards of six years later.



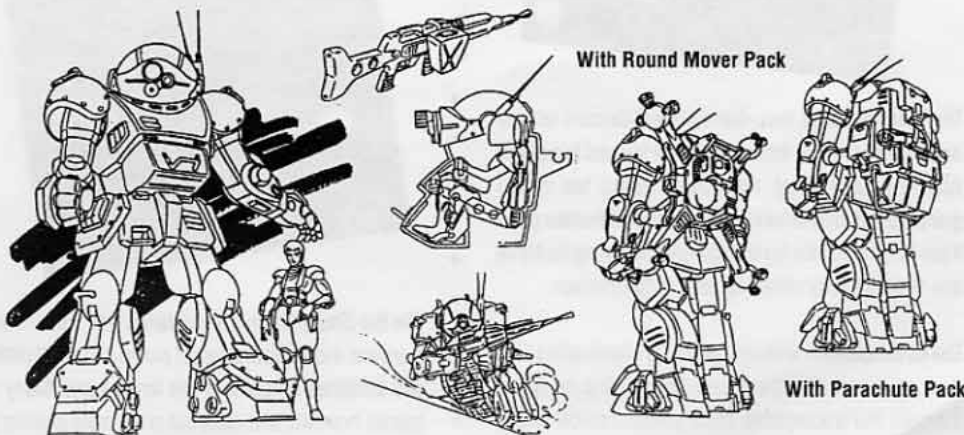
The Mecha

Gilgameth/Merukian

SCOPEDOG: ATM-09-ST

Armored Trooper Mid-09-Standard

This is the basic Armored Trooper, on which all other Gilgameth/Merukian designs are based. Scopedogs are therefore the most common and are almost readily available wherever the characters end up. Like all A.T.'s they are equipped with Armored Punch and Roller Dash wheels in the feet.





L-GAIM MODELS' REVIEW

by Marc-Alex Vézina

For some time now, Bandai has been reissuing old model series that were out of its catalog. Once again, models from Mamoru Nagano's first science-fiction epic, Heavy Metal L-Gaim, are available to modelers. L-Gaim led to the famous Five Stars Stories, and the mechas share more than a vague resemblance!

The models are quite good, molded in two colors with lots of details and options. On the down side, the molds are old and there is a lot of flash on the parts. Also, none of the mechas have the now-familiar rubber joints system, relying instead on simple plastic articulations.

Name: HM L-Gaim
Scale: 1/144



The star of the series, the L-Gaim is one of the most detailed models ever to come into our hands. It features two power launchers (laser guns), many beam sabers, two mines/grenades, a choice of hands and an optional booster pack. It can be built with the leg fairings open, revealing the frame and its actuators or closed for ease of construction.

The kit is molded in white and dark gray plastic with a little flash on almost all of the pieces. Considering the age of the mold, this is acceptable. Three grades of rubber tubing are provided but there are no decals. The only defect we could find is a cosmetic one: the head is a little too big

- when compared with the "original" but this is negligible.
- An exceptional model.
- Rating: *****

Name: HM Auge
Scale: 1/144



- The Auge is a simple model by the series' standards. It is less detailed than the L-Gaim but it's still a great kit.
- Molded in bright yellow plastic, it features many sabers and throw lancers (small beam sabers designed to be thrown) but no racks to glue them in the big shoulder shields. There was a little flash on most pieces but it is easily removable. Mobility is average. A good kit, accurately representing the Auge.
- Rating: ****

Name: HM Bat-Shu
Scale: 1/144



- The Bat-Shu's molds has not fared well with the years: there was a lot of flash on most pieces and small pinholes and scratches on some of the larger parts. Many were spared, however, and came out of the mold looking great like the optional booster pack's turbine outlets.

- The kit is molded in gray and violet plastic and includes a buster launcher (heavy laser cannon). Four grades of rubber tubing allows you to further detail the model.
- Rating: ****

Name: HM L-Gaim Mk II
Scale: 1/144



- The Mk II is the only variable model in the series being able to change to "Prowler" mode (high-powered jet fighter). Partly because of this, it is one of the most complex kit in the Heavy Metal line.

- The Mk II is molded in light and dark gray plastic, with the usual flash on some of the parts. The pieces feature finely recessed details with crisp molding. Two lengths of rubber tubing are provided.

- Included in the kit is a buster launcher and a binder (laser-absorbant shield) with several sabers and grenades. The Mk II can also use the L-Gaim's power launchers as mounting pins are provided for them on the arms.
- Rating: *****

Name: HM G-Roon
Scale: 1/144



The G-Roon is a bull-like mecha with great horns projecting from the side of its head. The kit itself is fairly simple including rubber tubing as usual for the power lines and a long spear.

The molding is crisp but simple. Mobility is good and the model looks exactly like the animated G-Roon. An excellent kit to relax with, if you like strange-looking machines. Rating: *****

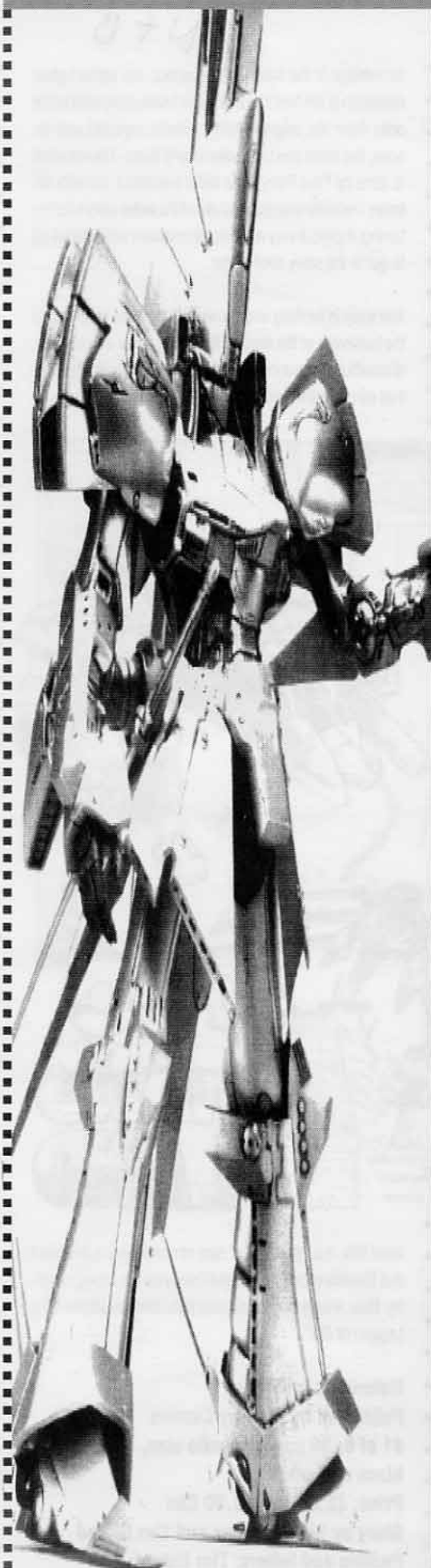
Name: HM Novel D-Sserd
Scale: 1/144



The D-Sserd can be seen in two way: as a nice model or an inaccurate reproduction of the animation. The kit, molded in red and dark gray plastic, is crisply molded and includes two sabers. Mobility is fairly good, except for lateral foot motion. However, the proportions aren't the same as the animation although they can easily be corrected to make an even nicer model.

Rating: ****

- ***** A must for the serious mecha modeler
- **** Great model, with few if any defect
- *** Many defects, but still a good model
- ** Challenge for the model builder
- * Lots of work required to make a nice model
- X Waste of money



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"INVID WAR"

Manga series



I will never understand Eternity. They can give us little jewels like Chaser Platoon and Death Shadow Rising, and feed us crap at the same time (like R_____h Genesis: The Legend of Zor). Fortunately, Invid War is part of the first category. When I saw this comic, I automatically liked it. Why? For its absolutely gorgeous cover! I have never seen a better drawing of Nova Satori and Jonathan Wolf, even in all my years as a R_____h fan. Wolf looks like B.D. in Megazone Part II and the drawing of the cover renders his totally humorless and bitter personality while Nova Satori (my favorite character of Southern Cross) has that slightly mischievous smile that makes you think she has something going on behind the scenes. Truly the ultimate drawing of that character (in my opinion).

The art inside is as good as the cover. Done by Tim Eldred (of Chaser Platoon and Cybersuit Arkadyne fame) and Fred Perry, it is easily the best R_____h comic to date. Tim did the penciling and shows once again that his

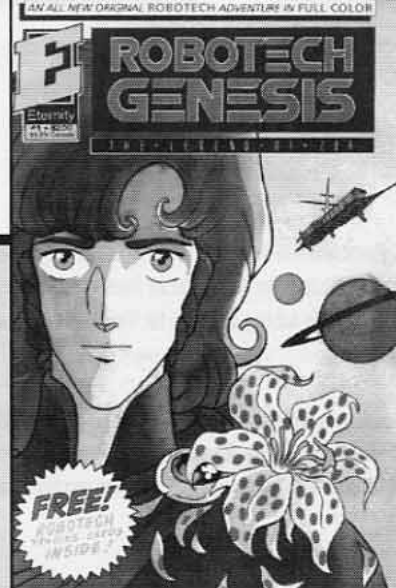
knowledge of the machines is perfect. His alpha fighter depiction is the best I've ever seen (even compared to the ones from the original Artmic Studio layouts) and for once, the Invid don't look like stupid bugs. The ink work is done by Fred Perry, who did a wonderful job with the tones. I wonder who thought about the water colors for the toning. It gives a very realistic atmosphere which helps us to get in the story even better.

The story is exciting and shows well the kind of mentality the survivors of the second R_____h war would have; distrustful of one another and warring for every little piece that can help them reconstruct their destroyed world.



Invid War is a "must have" type of comic and is the proof that Eternity can do wonderful things for the comic industry. Now, if only they could stop publishing stuff like "The Legend of Zor"...

- **Robotech: Invid War**
- **Published by Eternity Comics**
- **#1 of 6, 36 pages, comic size,**
- **black and white,**
- **Price: \$2.50 US, \$3.00 Can**
- **Story by Bill Spangler and Tim Eldred**
- **Pencils and letters: Tim Eldred**
- **Inks and tones: Fred Perry**



ROBOTECH GENESIS THE LEGEND OF ZOR

**One question about this comic:
Why?!**

Yeah, well, I know R_____h™ (do not say this word or you could be pulverized, or even worse: sued!) But come on guys! Eternity can do much better than that! I mean, they're the ones who published Chaser Platoon (which is a big cult thing), and most of Tim Eldred's best productions. Why are they torturing us with this stuff?

When I first saw it, I thought I was going to be sick! The cover looks like an enormous flat candy! And the art inside is much much worse.

To begin with, let's face this fact: the Waltrip brothers do not know how to draw! Or at the very least, not enough to do a comic. The characters look like they are thoroughly constipated; their poses are often ridiculous or simply uninteresting. The backgrounds lack details just like drawings from a ten year old child. But the worst thing is the color! Did they think it was going to make it better?

I have seen some very nice things from Eternity (like the Invid War comic being published at this moment, the best R_____h™ comic to date and a very well done story to enjoy: really nice work) and I hope they will think twice about doing another comic by the Waltrip brothers. I don't feel right about saying such things but it is our responsibility to honestly say what we feel about the works we review.

What makes me sad is the kind of reputation this company could soon acquire if it goes on publishing such crap, knowing it deserves so much better...

- **Robotech Genesis: The Legend of Zor**
- **Published by Eternity Comics**
- **#1 of 6, 36 pages, comic size,**
- **full color**
- **Price: \$2.50 US/\$3.25 Can**
- **Story and art: Jason and John Waltrip**

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM RAPPORT DELUXE

Yes, yes. I know. We have seen this material a thousand times. But presented this way? With this good quality of detail? I doubt it! In this 232 page book, you find every detail available on Gundam MS, from the MS themselves to the kind of underwear the characters are wearing!

The first section presents a history of the MS with very interesting artwork. Of course, there's a mechanical and characters section. The characters section is the usual one, only with more drawings. It's the mechanical section that is remarkable. We see a lot of details that have never been seen before, like a good presentation of the weapons and cockpits. The drawings of the mechas themselves have all been redone, with a lot more details, such as realistic hands and articulations, cables and so on. The designs are a lot cleaner and of a good size so that you can really see what's in there (did we ever have to guess about some of these details or what!).

You also get a presentation of the 42 episodes of the TV series (in very clear color cels) that shows everything you need to understand what's going on, as well as a story digest accompanied by illustrations from the manga (Tomino-san should do more mangas, his drawings are cool!). Furthermore, you find a small (much too small!) "The making of Gundam in images" section. A lecture by Tomino-san would have been a good idea but by now, he must be tired of talking about Gundam (it's understandable, it's been nearly fourteen years since he made Gundam MS!).

A good thing is the presentation of all the important dates before the "One Year War". Beautifully printed and presented, with a handsome dust jacket, this book (like the other Gundam book we present in this section) has one problem that could scare a lot of anime fans: its price! Outside of Japan, it is very costly (nearly 50\$ CAN) and also quite rare. That's a pity because if you want a Gundam MS bible, this book is definitely it!



GUNDAM F91 ANIME

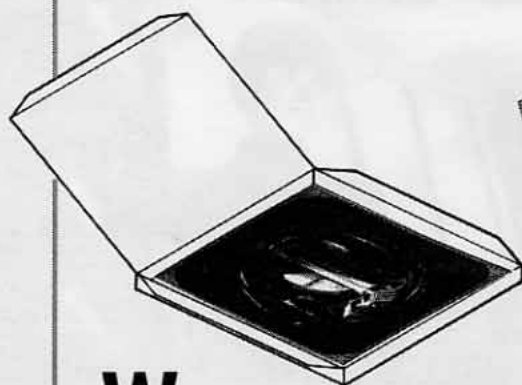
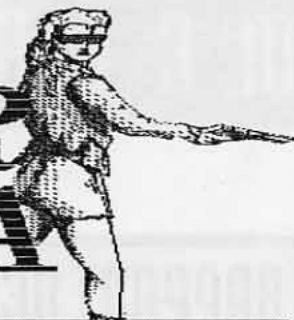
If, like me, you have seen Gundam F91 and have not exactly understood everything that was going on because the action was happening too damn fast, this book is for you. This is the entire 2 hour movie in one 224 page comic! So if you look at it (I can't read Japanese yet but one day, I will!) you are likely to understand who does what and how. We nearly see the action frame by frame!

Page 2 contains a brief introduction to the characters and the manga itself is separated in ten acts of about 20 to 30 pages each. We see the movie from its very beginning (the rather noisy entry of the Crossbones Vanguard's MS by an airlock of the Frontier IV side is very well depicted) to its very end showing all the battles and (very) small discussions the characters are going through to survive.

The cels that were chosen are magnificent, very clear and as opposed to many movie comics, the colors are exactly the same as the movie. Some of the scenes are masterfully represented, like the first fight in the streets of Frontier IV and the last battle against Koroza Ronah's (the guy with the metal mask) Lafressia Mobile Armor.

Another good scene is the one where Seabook Arno (the Gundam pilot) is looking for his sweetheart Cecily Fairchild. The last fifteen pages contain a lecture by Yoshiyuki Tomino, the creator of Gundam (but it's in Japanese, sniff, sniff!). Maybe he explains in there why the movie isn't as good as the other Gundams? There's one thing that we should mention though: the price of the comic. In Canada, it costs nearly fifty dollars! It's a good thing our office bought it, not!! It is also as far as I know particularly rare. My personal feeling: this is a truly magnificent comic depicting a very ordinary film. If you see this book and have the money, buy it!

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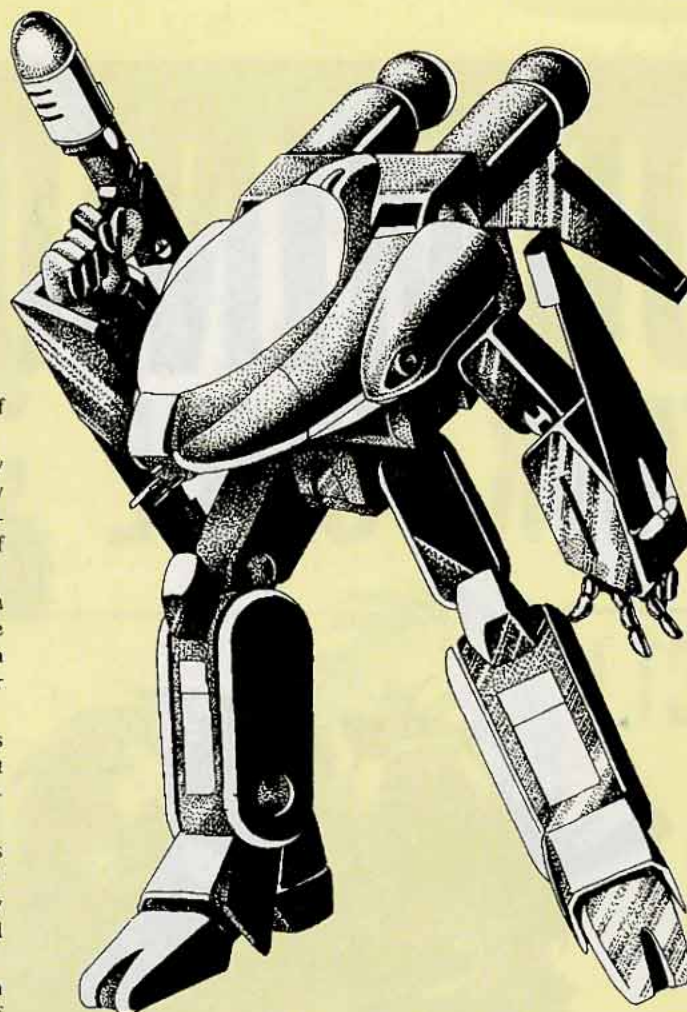
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Volume Two: Contains episodes **40: Volunteers**, **41: Half Moon**, and **42: Danger Zone**. More combat and adventure in space and on Earth as the ensuing war begins to heat up. The Masters want something but nobody can figure out what it is. The mystery continues, but spirits are high, the Southern Cross appears to be on a roll. **Available December 1st, 1991.**

Volume Three: Contains episodes **43: Prelude to Battle**, **44: The Trap**, **45: Metal Fire**. Dana leads her squad into the alien mothership where they experience a number of strange things, encounter Musica, mistress of the Cosmic Harp, and barely escape a trap. civilians are taken hostage and turned into the zombie-like pilots of bioroids. Zor is captured and the mystery and madness thickens. **Available Mid-January, 1992.**



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Volume Four: Episodes **46: Star Dust**, **47: Outsiders**, **48: Deja vu**. Dana continues to exhibit a bit of empathy and psychic hunches and can not shake certain feelings about the captive bioroid pilot (Zor). **Available late February, 1992.**

Volume Five: Presents episodes **49: A New Recruit**, **50: Triumvirate**, **51: Clone Chamber**. It is decided to induct Zor into the Army of the Southern Cross. A full scale assault is launched against the Masters. Zor, Dana and Bowie get closer to the secret of the Robotech Masters and protoculture. Plus epic space battles! **Available late March, 1992.**

Volume Six: Contains episodes **52: Love Song**, **53: The Hunters**, **54: Mind Game**. Louie Nichols creates the Pupil Pistol, Dana is involved in more intrigue, while the savage space battle continues, with exciting fight sequences involving the Veritech Copter. **Available late April, 1992.**

Volume Seven: Presents episodes **55: Dana in Wonderland**, **56: Crisis Point**, and **57: Day Dreamer**. The continues to escalate, with terrible consequences. Zor seems to be going mad, Dana is becoming more rebellious, Bowie finds love and the mystery continues. **Available late May, 1992.**

Volume Eight: The Conclusion of the Southern Cross series! This is it, the final showdown with the Robotech Masters, the decimation of Earth, death and sacrifice, hard decisions and a terrible glimpse of the thing to come. Includes episodes **58: Final Nightmare**, **59: The Invid Connection**, and **60: Catastrophe**. **Available June or July 1992!**

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